Sept. 17, 1984

THE NEW YORKER

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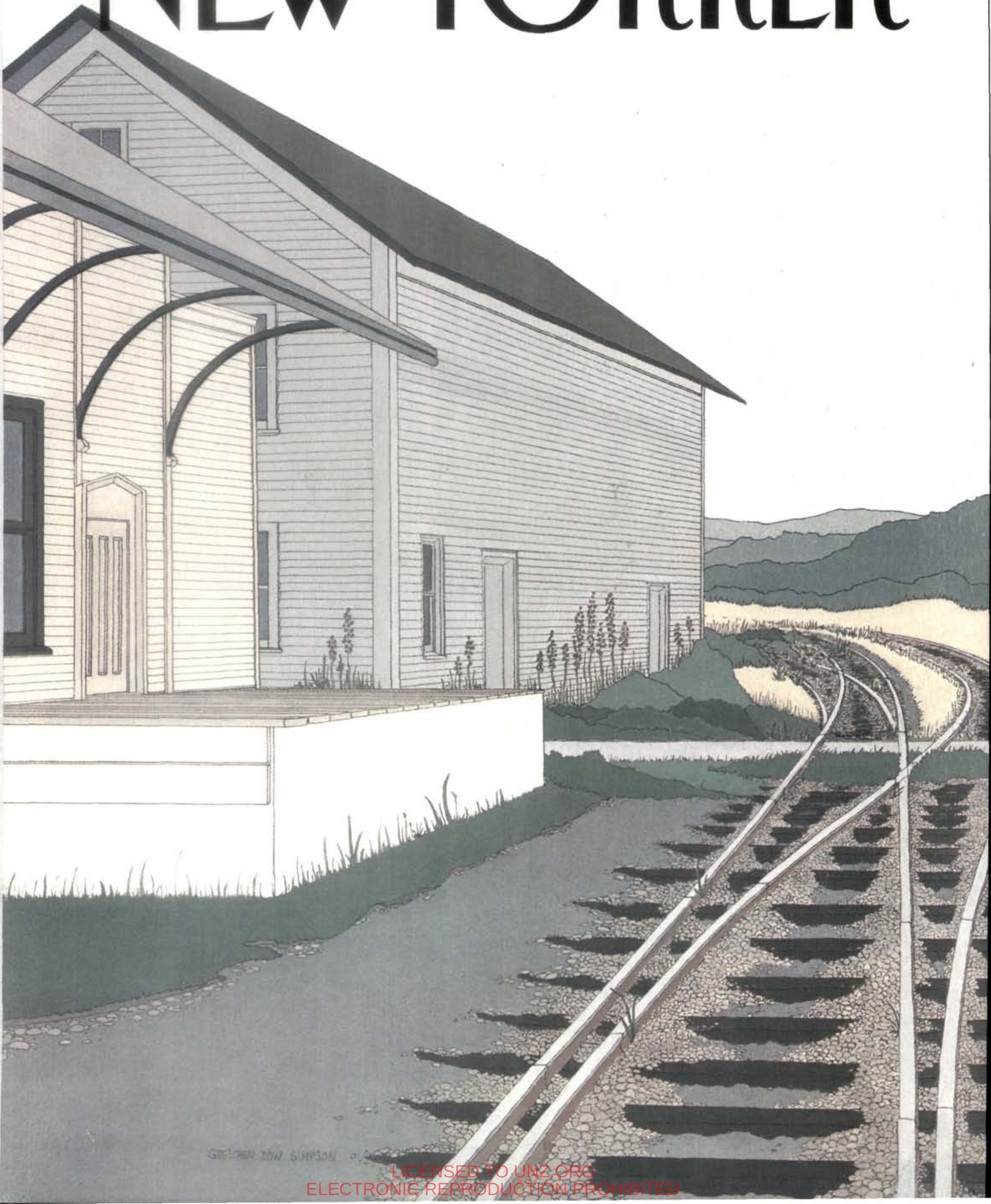
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

A CONSCIENTIOUS CALENDAR OF EVENTS OF INTEREST

THE THEATRE

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

A . . . My Name Is Alice—A musical revue conceived and directed by Joan Micklin Silver and Julianne Boyd. (Top of the Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 982-9292. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Benvenuto Festival—The first in a series of productions by three avant-garde theatre companies from Italy, Falso Movimento's "Otello," a modernization of the Verdi opera, closes Sunday, Sept. 23. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Nightly, except Mondays, at 7:30; festival runs through Sunday, Oct. 21.)

Blue Window—Craig Lucas's engaging, plaintive comedy about a dinner party in this city, with an assortment of guests of assorted sexes, is very well performed by The Production Company, under Norman René's direction. With Christine Estabrook, Matt Craven, and Randy Danson, among other good actors. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/3/84.) (Production Company Theatre, 15 W. 28th St. 686-1470. Tuesdays through Thursdays at 8, and Fridays and Saturdays at 7 and 10.)

Danny and the Deep Blue Sea—John Turturro is the rough truck driver and June Stein the tough young woman who meet in a bar in the Bronx and proceed from there in John Patrick Shanley's melodrama. The strong direction was by Barnet Kellman. (6/18/84) (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330. Wednesday through Friday at 8; Saturday at 7 and 9; and Sunday at 7. Matinée Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, Sept. 16.)

Death of a Salesman—A five-week return engagement of the Arthur Miller play, starring Dustin Hoffman, Kate Reid, and John Malkovich. Michael Rudman is the director. Opens Friday, Sept. 14, and will run through Sunday, Oct. 21. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Design for Living—A male artist, a male playwright, and a female interior designer make up a triangle that gives them the greatest possible pleasure; for a time, the triangle turns into a rectangle, which spoils everything. Such is the plot of this harsh comedy by Noël Coward. Directed by George C. Scott and with a cast headed by Anne Swift, Frank Converse, and Raul Julia, it is well worth going to see. (7/2/84) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 581-0720. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Endgame—A revival of a play by Samuel Beckett, directed by and with Alvin Epstein. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10:15; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Glengarry Glen Ross—A dark comedy by David Mamet, about a handful of desperate real-estate salesmen in Chicago. Their language is harsh, filthy, and funny, and the actors portraying them are worthy of the highest praise. (4/2/84) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Hurlyburly—David Rabe's wry, brilliant comedy about la vie de bohème in Hollywood is very well performed under Mike Nichols' dynamic direction. William Hurt, Ron Silver, Judith Ivey, Sigourney Weaver, Jerry Stiller, Cynthia Nixon, and Harvey Keitel make up the first-rate cast. (7/2/84) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

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Isn't It Romantic—A spirited production of Wendy Wasserstein's sometimes painful but always witty comedy about a pair of female "best friends" at age twenty-eight, and especially about the trials of one of them, Janie Blumberg. With Lisa Banes, Scottie Bloch, Tom Robbins, Cristine Rose, Marge Kotlisky, Alan Rosenberg, Nicholas Hormann, and Steven Gilborn. (12/26/83) (Lucille Lortel Theatre, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Lester Sims Retires Tomorrow—George Murdock and Jennifer Rhodes in a play by William Curtis. (Cubiculo, 414 W. 51st St. 265-2138. Thursdays through Saturdays, and Wednesday, Sept. 19, at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

Light Opera of Manhattan—Through Sunday, Sept. 23: Gilbert and Sullivan's H.M.S. PINAFORE. (Eastside, 334 E. 74th St. 861-2288. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays at 2, and Saturdays and Sundays at 3:30.)

Nite Club Confidential—An amiable salute—tongue in, tongue out of cheek—to night clubs in the fifties, with new songs written for the occasion by Dennis Deal and Albert Evans, and old ones by, among others, Harold Arlen, Frank Loesser, and Johnny Mercer. The music sounds fine, and the company is able and agreeable; Tom Spiroff is, for a few brief, shining moments, a knockout as Elvis Presley. (Ballroom Theatre, 253 W. 28th St. 594-0326. Tuesdays through Thursdays at 8; Fridays at 8 and 11; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30.)

Noises Off—As funny a farce as one could ask for. The author is Michael Frayn and the director is Michael Blakemore. The cast includes Paxton Whitehead and Douglas Seale. (12/19/83) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 245-3430. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

On Approval—An acceptable, summer-stock kind of revival of Frederick Lonsdale's comedy of British high life in the nineteen-twenties. The four American actors of the company do pretty well under the brisk, capable direction of Daniel Gerroll. (5/21/84) (Roundabout Stage Two, 307 W. 26th St. 242-7800. Wednesday through Saturday at 8. Matinées Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday at 2. Closes Sunday, Sept. 16.)

The Real Thing—The hero of Tom Stoppard's new comedy is a clever and highly popular playwright, though not, from the evidence, a very good one. He wishes to be loved, but his

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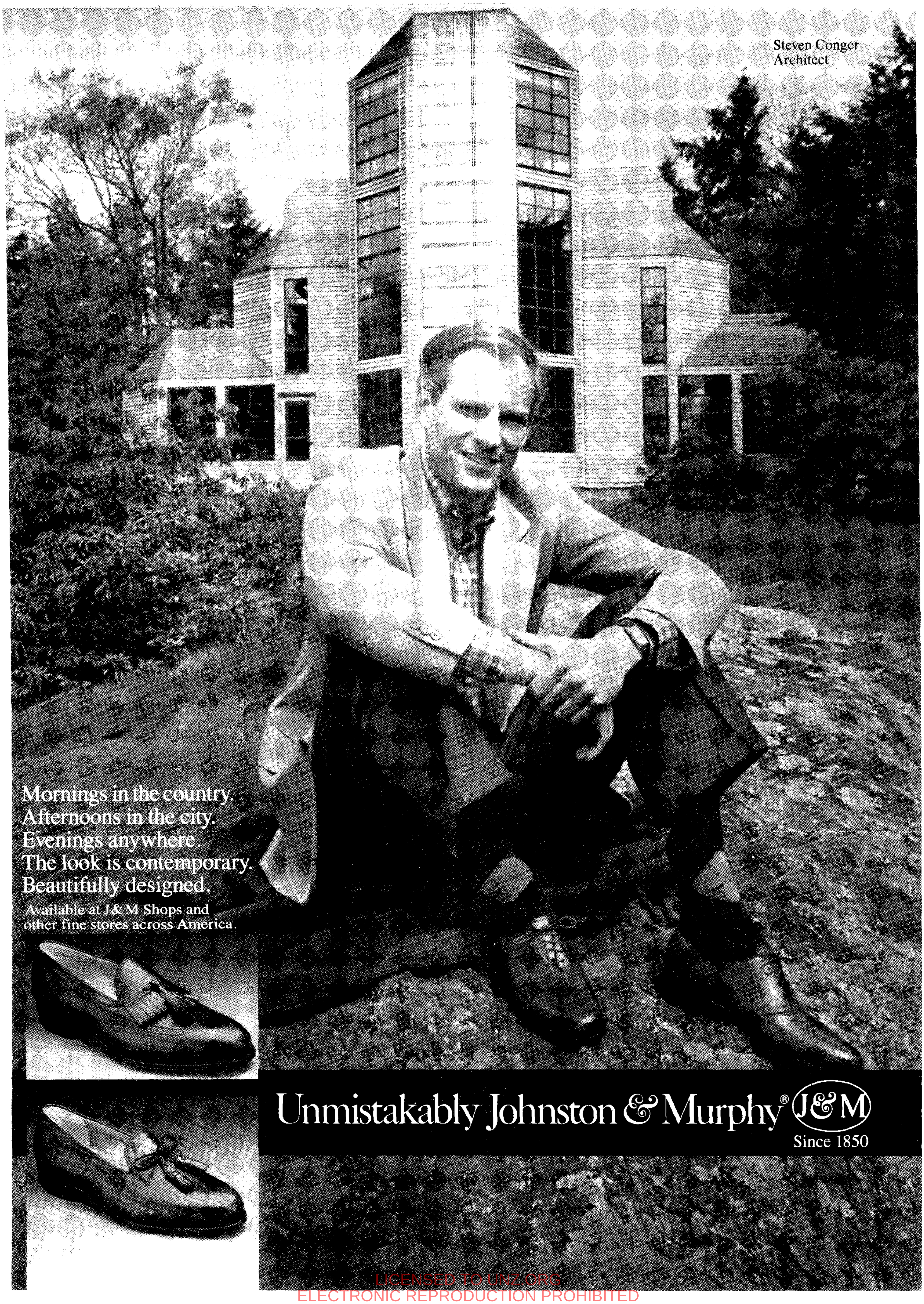
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own capacity for loving is meagre indeed. The playwright's mistress and eventual wife proves to be even more selfish than he is. An exemplary production, directed by Mike Nichols. John Vickery and Caroline Lagerfelt head the cast. (1/16/84) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Split Second—This play, by Dennis McIntyre, tells the story of the killing of a racially abusive white thief by a black policeman, and the consequences of the murder among the policeman's colleagues and family and within his own conscience. With John Danelle in the leading role, Michele Shay, and Norman Matlock, among other good actors. (6/18/84) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-8545. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Sunday in the Park with George—A beautiful and often very touching musical by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine, based on the life (partly imaginary) of Georges Seurat. With Mandy Patinkin and Bernadette Peters. Starting Tuesday, Sept. 18, Robert Westenberg will replace Mr. Patinkin. (5/14/84) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

The Tap Dance Kid—Nothing is less needed in the world than a didactic musical in which we learn that middle-class ambitions do not deserve to impede talent. A few rousing dance scenes and the rest is ho-hum. (1/2/84) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 869-0550. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Long Runs—**BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS:** Neil Simon looks back with fondness upon his youth in the gloomy thirties. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 757-8646. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **LA CAGE AUX FOLLES:** A musical with George Hearn and Keith Michell as a pair of tenderhearted middle-aged lovers presiding over a drag-queen night club in Saint-Tropez; the production is one of the most beautiful—and extravagant—ever to reach Broadway. The settings are by David Mitchell, the costumes are by Theoni V. Aldredge, and the lighting is by Jules Fisher. Jerry Herman wrote the music and lyrics; the book is by Harvey Fierstein. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 757-2626. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to the sets and costumes by John Napier. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **DREAMGIRLS:** Traditional musical-comedy hokum, directed and choreographed by Michael Bennett at his usual frantic pace. The enormous cast is young, tireless, and talented. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** 10,144 performances so far. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **FOOL FOR LOVE:** Sam Shepard's play—mysterious, funny, and beautiful—is about two battling, loving lovers in a motel room at the edge of the Mojave Desert and about many other matters as well. Mr. Shepard directed. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **42ND STREET:** A musical based on the old Warner Brothers movie and by no means an improvement on it. Directed and choreographed by the late Gower Champion. With Jerry Orbach and Anne Rogers. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 246-0730. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS:** Taking off from Roger Corman's 1960 horror quickie about a man-eating plant, this exuberant, jokey musical is wholly free of camp. The score is by Alan Menken, and Howard Ashman directed and wrote the book and lyrics. Martin P. Robinson designed the menacing plant and it speaks and sings in the menacing baritone of Ron Taylor. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Sundays at 2 and 5.) . . . **MY ONE AND ONLY:** Tommy Tune and Twiggy in a newly invented musical comedy (book by Peter Stone and Timothy S. Mayer), which brings back half a dozen superlative Gershwin songs. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 398-0280. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **OH! CALCUTTA!:** A collection of short sketches that purport to give us a refreshing view of sex and do not. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 757-7164. Mondays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 9:30; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **TORCH SONG TRILOGY:** Three plays—humorous, sad, sentimental, and witty—by Harvey Fierstein. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

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MISCELLANY

The Chinese Magic Revue—A charming, agile little company from Taiwan that includes jugglers, acrobats, magicians, and dancers, all of them dressed in dazzling costumes. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313. Wednesday, Sept. 12, at 2 and 8; Thursday and Friday, Sept. 13-14, at 8; Saturday, Sept. 15, at 2 and 8; and Sunday, Sept. 16, at 3 and 7:30.)

Forbidden Broadway '84—A musical satire of Shubert Alley denizens. The lyrics to the song parodies are by Gerard Alessandrini. (Palsson's Upstairs, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. Tuesdays through Thursdays at 8:30; Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 and 11:30; and Sundays at 8:30.)

DANCE

Merce Cunningham Dance Company—Opening performances of a nine-day engagement, presenting a new "Event" each evening. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Friday and Saturday, Sept. 21-22, at 8.)

Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble—Programs of contemporary dance. (Theatre of the Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. 864-2929. Wednesday through Friday, Sept. 12-14, at 8, and Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 15-16, at 2 and 8.)

Charles Moore Dance Theatre—"Jigbu," "Tyi Wara," "Bongo," "Awassa Astrige," and other works. (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. Friday and Saturday, Sept. 14-15, at 8, and Sunday, Sept. 16, at 5. For information about tickets, call 807-4158.)

La La La Human Steps—Presenting "Businessman in the Process of Becoming an Angel." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Wednesday through Saturday, Sept. 19-22, at 8, and Sunday, Sept. 23, at 3.)

NIGHT LIFE

(A highly arbitrary listing in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Singer and pianist **STEVE ROSS** is back in action in the Oak Room Tuesdays through Saturdays from nine to one. Sundays Buck Buchholz presides over the Rose Room from five-thirty to eleven. Dining.

Angry Squire, 216 Seventh Ave., at 23rd St. (242-9066)—A long, narrow, crowded, nautical (schooner-era) bar and restaurant. **DAKOTA STATON**, who sounds especially good on bluesy, up-tempo numbers, sings here through Saturday, Sept. 15; on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 21-22, the **ERROL PARKER** trio will be on board. Sets at ten, eleven-thirty, and one.

Bitter End, 149 Bleecker St. (673-7030)—A rock, folk, folk-rock, and comedy club. The schedule: Wednesday, Sept. 12, Crybaby, the King Bees, and the Bachelors; Thursday, Sept. 13, Soldier's Fancy, the Models, the Knobs, and Yahoo Yahotts; Friday, Sept. 14, the Mark Mayo Blues Band, Three Car Crash, and Two One Two; Saturday, Sept. 15, Bedrock, Broken Promises, and the Shane Gang; Sunday, Sept. 16, Johnny Jones & Basement Boogie, Another Mule, and Transformation; Monday and Tuesday, Sept. 17-18, comedy nights; Wednesday, Sept. 19, Frank Reeves & the Sneaker Boys, Citi Beat, and the Poor Boys; Thursday, Sept. 20, a poetry reading by punk-rock musician, actor, and poet Richard Hell; and Friday and Saturday, Sept. 21-22, the **PERSUASIONS**. Shows start at ten and twelve-thirty weeknights and at nine on Sundays. Dining and dancing.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—According to the barman, there've been scads of clubs at this address, going all the way back to speakeasy days. The **MODERN JAZZ QUARTET** is here until Sunday, Sept. 16; on Monday, Sept. 17, Brenda Bufalino and the Amy Duncan trio will trade sets; and starting Tuesday, Sept. 18, singer **BOBBY MC FERRIN** will sing with his All-Stars. Music from nine. Trumpeter **TED CURSON** conducts after-hours (real late, after two in the morning) jam sessions every night but Monday.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—The schedule: Wednesday, Sept. 12, John Cafferty & the Beaver Brown Band; Thursday through Saturday, Sept. 13-15, Allan Holdsworth & I.O.U.; Wednesday, Sept. 19, the **TANNAHILL WEAVERS**; Friday, Sept. 21, Jonathan Edwards; and Saturday, Sept. 22, the Ellen Foley band. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine and midnight. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Some of the most accomplished and famous pianists, bassists, and, occasionally, guitarists in the world (their names are sometimes posted on a little piece of paper taped to the back of the pay phone) work in this dark-panelled, perpetually (it seems) crowded, talkative New York bar and restaurant. The pianists and bassists: **JOHN HICKS** and **CLINT HOUSTON** through Saturday, Sept. 15, and Joyce Collins and **MICHAEL MOORE** starting Monday, Sept. 17. Flutist Ali Ryerson will perform on Sunday, Sept. 16. Music from nine-forty-five.

Broadway Joe's, 315 W. 46th St., near Eighth Ave. (246-6513)—**JIMMY LYON**, urbane and swinging, can be found at the piano from ten-thirty to two Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—**JULIE WILSON**, a wonderfully convincing

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

singer with excellent taste (she's doing Rodgers and Hart tunes), has taken up fall residence in the Café Carlyle. Music Tuesdays through Saturdays at ten and midnight. . . . **BARBARA CARROLL** is at the piano in the Bemelmans Bar from nine Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll as a garage industry: Wednesday, Sept. 12, the Egyptians, the Models, and Black Iris; Thursday, Sept. 13, J. C. & the Microtones, Children's Playground, and They Might Be Giants; Friday, Sept. 14, Pinhead, the Toasters, and the Mood Elevators; Saturday, Sept. 15, the Egyptians, Mercy Seat, the Jupiter Jets, and Me & I; Sunday, Sept. 16, the Vandals, Damage, Tales of Terror, and No Thanks; and Tuesday, Sept. 18, the Gray Zone, Sabotage, and Then You Woke Up. Monday is showcase night. Music from long after nine-thirty.

Eagle Tavern, 355 W. 14th St., at Ninth Ave. (924-0275)—A homey music room for devout admirers of bluegrass, old-time country music, and British and Irish folk music. (Devout doesn't mean subdued; there is plenty of hooting—not the self-indulgent, rowdy kind but the supporting, appreciative kind—and handclapping.) The musicians: Wednesday, Sept. 12, Josie McDermott; Saturday, Sept. 15, Charged Particles; Tuesday, Sept. 18, Kevin Burke and Jerry Obeirne; Saturday, Sept. 22, Joe Val & the New England Bluegrass Boys. Mondays and Fridays are Irish-music nights, too. Music from eight on Wednesdays and Thursdays and from nine Mondays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

Eddie Condon's, 144 W. 54th St. (265-8277)—A dark, sleek hangout for traditional jazz. The house sextet plays Thursdays through Saturdays. On Sunday, Sept. 16, **SCOTT HAMILTON,** a young tenor saxophonist who plays in a big-voiced, swing-era style, will lead a quintet. Mondays and Tuesdays, Ed Polcer's quintet performs, and on Wednesdays a hot-jazz combo is present. Music from eight-thirty to two. Wednesdays, the Bill Simon and George Simon quintet works from five-thirty to eight-thirty. Dining.

Edwardian Room, in the Plaza Hotel, Fifth Ave. at 59th St. (759-3000)—Guitarist **BUCKY PIZZARELLI** performs fervent jazz disguised as hotel music with his trio on Fridays and Saturdays from ten-thirty until one-thirty. Dining and dancing.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Brazilian singer **ASTRUD GILBERTO** works with her backing crew through Sunday, Sept. 16; on Tuesday, Sept. 18, guitarist **GEORGE VAN EPS** will begin a rare New York club date. Mondays are claimed by guitarist **LES PAUL** and a trio. Sets begin at nine. Dining.

Folk City, 130 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (254-8449)—The schedule: Wednesday, Sept. 12, at nine and eleven, the Last Roundup and True Love; Friday, Sept. 14, at eight and eleven, Terry Waldo & the Gotham City Jazz Band; Thursday, Sept. 20, at nine and eleven, Casselberry & Dupree and Toshi Reagon; and Saturday, Sept. 22, at eight and eleven, Brooklyn's singing cowboy **JACK ELLIOTT.** Sundays are comedy nights, and Mondays are hootenanny nights.

Greene Street, 101 Greene St., near Prince St. (925-2415)—A big, echoey, self-conscious space in which to listen to some worthwhile drummerless music. The schedule: pianist **JOANNE BRACKEEN** through Thursday, Sept. 13; Friday and Saturday, Sept. 14-15, singer Marion Cowings; Sunday and Monday, Sept. 16-17, Vladimir Shafranov; and Tuesday through Saturday, Sept. 18-22, singer **CARMEN LUNDY.** Mondays through Thursdays at eight-thirty, ten, and eleven-thirty; Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty, eleven, and one; and Sundays at seven, eight-thirty, and ten. Dining.

Gregory's, 1149 First Ave., at 63rd St. (371-2220)—Small enough to be a hamburger stand (it was) and musical enough to be a jazz landmark (it is). Wednesdays through Sundays, **DAVID ALLYN** sings with the Scott Hardy trio; on Mondays singer and pianist **BROOKS KERR** and bassist John Belzaguy team up; and Tuesdays belong to guitarist **CHUCK WAYNE'S** trio. All these groups begin about ten.

Hanratty's, 1754 Second Ave., at 91st St. (289-3200)—A dining room with a view of a pianist. **JUDY CARMICHAEL,** who looks like a wisp of a girl but who is actually a fireball of a stride pianist, works at the dining-room grand after eight-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Lone Star Café, 61 Fifth Ave., at 13th St. (242-1664)—Authentic in its Texasness—you can tell the atmosphere is more like Austin than Dallas or Houston because there are no freeways in here. The performers: Pure Prairie League and Rhonda Coullet & the Cows through Thursday, Sept. 13; Friday and Saturday, Sept. 14-15, Bud Moffett and Way Out West; Sunday, Sept. 16, a benefit concert; Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 19-20, singer and bassist **RICK DANKO** and drummer and singer **LEVON HELM.** Music from eight-thirty. Dining.

Lush Life, 184 Thompson St., at Bleecker St. (228-3788)—A simple, unpretentious jazz club that has an exciting, established feel to it. The main music bill consists of exceedingly worthy trios right now: pianist **CEDAR WALTON,** bassist **RON CARTER,** and drummer **BILLY HIGGINS** through Sunday, Sept. 16; and starting Tuesday, Sept. 18, pianist **JACK DE JOHNETTE,** bassist **EDDIE GOMEZ,** and drummer **FREDDIE WAITS.** Monday's feature is the **TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI—LEW TABACKIN NEW YORK JAZZ ORCHESTRA.** Sets begin Sundays through Thursdays at eight-thirty, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine. Dining.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—**ARTHUR SIEGEL** and **SANDY STEWART** are paying tribute to Jerome Kern Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. On Monday nights from nine-thirty to midnight, the New Orleans Funeral and Ragtime Band, featuring Woody Allen on clarinet, occupies the bandstand. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Mikell's, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—For more than a decade, rhythm-and-blues headquarters in New York. The R. & B. and jazz lineup: Wednesday, Sept. 12, the Norman Riley quintet; Thursday, Sept. 13, the Jeff Franzel band; and Friday and Saturday, Sept. 14-15, singer **JON LUCIEN.** Music from about ten until two. Dining.

Peppermint Lounge, 100 Fifth Ave., at 15th St. (989-9505)—A three-story club for r. and d., r. and r., R. and R., and R. & B., *if* you have a proper I.D. Friday, Sept. 14, the Raybeats, and Saturday, Sept. 15, East of Eden. Live music from about eleven-thirty. Dancing.

Rainbow Room, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (757-9090)—An Art Deco playroom on the sixty-fifth floor. Lee Castle and the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra are on the bandstand until Sunday, Sept. 16; on Tuesday, Sept. 18, **BOB HAGGART** will bring in his orchestra. Music Tuesdays through Thursdays from seven to one; Fridays and Saturdays from eight to two; and Sundays from six to midnight. Dining and dancing.

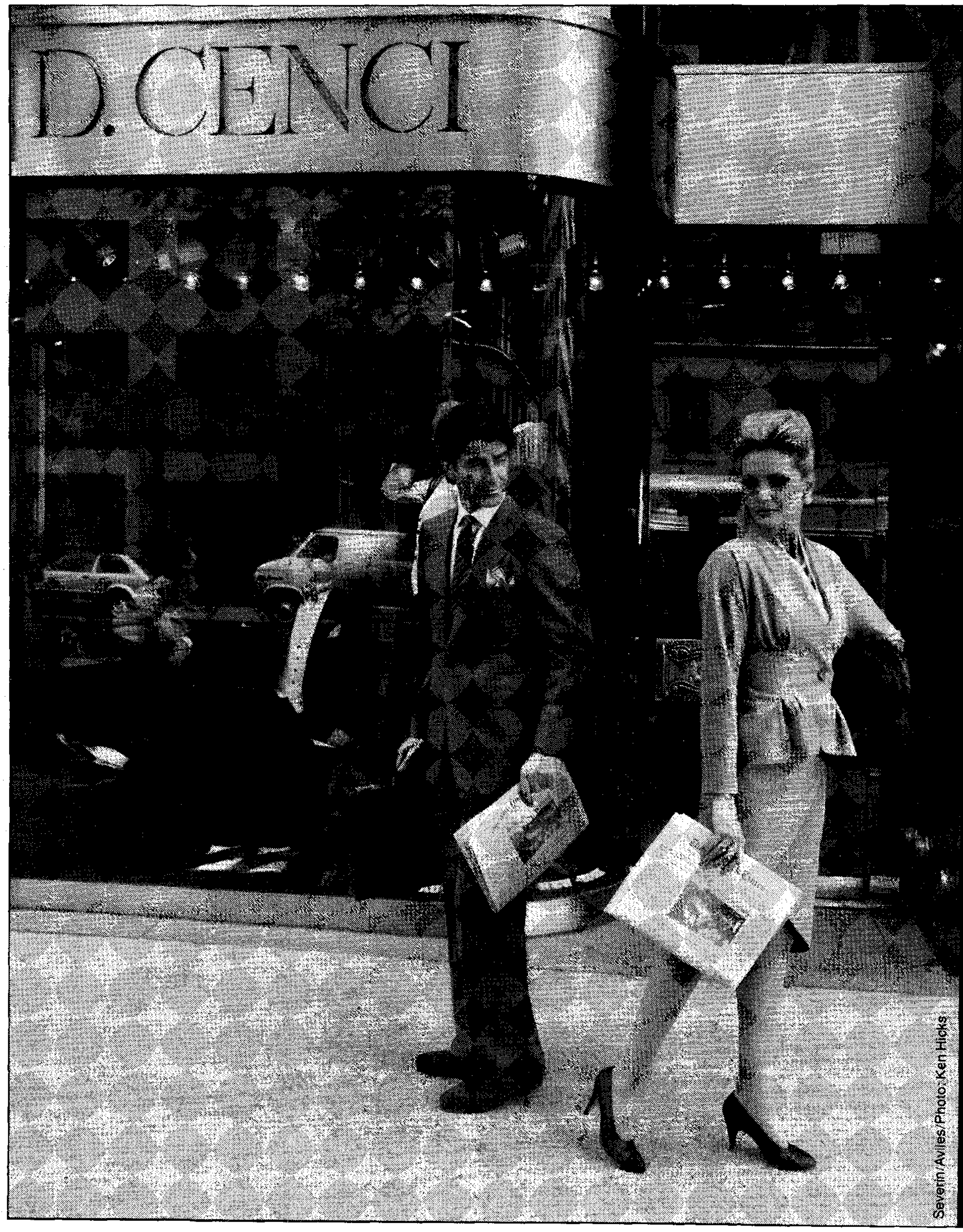
Red Blazer Too, 1576 Third Ave., at 88th St. (876-0440)—Traditional jazz off the beaten track—far from West 54th Street and the Village, that is. Different bands work from nine every night but Sunday, when the music begins at eight. Dining.

Ritz, 119 E. 11th St. (254-2800)—A big, fancy (but the appropriate dress is black sneakers rather than black tie) thirties ballroom, complete with eighties video, that presents past, present, future, past-perfect, present-perfect, future-perfect, and imperfect forms of rock and roll. Thursday, Sept. 13, Sheila E.; Friday, Sept. 14, Jail Bait, O Boy, and Pillow; Saturday, Sept. 15, Men Without Hats; and Saturday, Sept. 22, Tracie & the Soul Squad. Shows tend to begin sometime after midnight. Dancing.

St. Regis-Sheraton, Fifth Ave. at 55th St. (753-4500)—In the King Cole Room pianist **JOE BUSHKIN** guides an eleven-piece band that features **DOC CHEATHAM** on trumpet in a salute to Louis Armstrong. Nightly, except Sundays, at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining.

Seventh Avenue South, 21 Seventh Ave. S., at Leroy St. (242-4694)—A pleasant second-floor jazz-rock and R. & B. club. The lineup: Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 12-13, guitarist **CHUCK LOEB** and singer **CARMEN QUESTA;** Friday and Saturday, Sept. 14-15, electric violinist Noel Pointer; Monday and Tuesday, Sept. 17-18, guitarist **HIRAM BULLOCK;** Wednesday, Sept. 19, **JUMP STREET,** a rhythm-and-blues outfit; Thursday, Sept. 20, singer Connie

D.CENCI MAD.AVE



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James; and Friday and Saturday, Sept. 21-22, saxophonist **BOB MINTZER.** Music from nine-thirty.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great place to listen to Brazilian and other music—Brazilian-jazz groups, samba bands, African bands, Caribbean bands, and all-percussion ensembles that perform *carnaval*-like music—and it tends to be swirling, heady, wonderful stuff. On its busy weekends, the club feels like the rush hour in Rio. Wednesday, Sept. 12, Moja Nya; Thursday, Sept. 13, Obo Addy and Kukrudu; Friday, Sept. 14, **LOREMIL MACHADO & THE SARAVA BAHIA BAND;** Saturday, Sept. 15, and Friday and Saturday, Sept. 21-22, **PÉ-DE-BOI;** Wednesday, Sept. 19, Clymax; and Thursday, Sept. 20, the **AFRICAN CONNECTION.** Music from ten. Dining. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Drummer and headmaster **ART BLAKEY** and his latest batch of **JAZZ MESSENGERS** can be heard through Sunday, Sept. 16; on Tuesday, Sept. 18, tenor saxophonist **CHICO FREEMAN** will arrive with his quintet. Mondays belong to pianist, composer, and sage **GIL EVANS** and his orchestra. Shows from about ten. Dining.

Tramps, 125 E. 15th St., at Irving Pl. (777-5077)—A friendly, unassuming music hangout. Wednesday, Sept. 12, rock singer and guitarist **ELLIOTT MURPHY** will drop by, and Thursdays through Saturdays are the property of **BUSTER POINDEXTER** (a.k.a. David Johansen) **& THE BANSHEES OF BLUE.** Music after ten.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—On Mondays, exciting, adept salsa bands take over the big downstairs room at nine to play for excitable audiences. On Sept. 17, **LA SENSUAL** and **OSCAR D'LEON** will be present, along with guest jazz soloist trombonist **STEVE TURRE.** On Friday, Sept. 14, at eleven, vibraharpists **KARL BERGER, JAY HOGGARD,** and **KHAN JAMAL** will perform with bassist **REGGIE WORKMAN,** pianist **JOHN HICKS,** and drummer **FREDDIE WAITS** opposite singer **LEON THOMAS.** . . . ¶ And starting at nine-thirty out on the Terrace pianist **JAKI BYARD** and Ralph Hamperian play duets nightly, except Mondays. Jazz harpist **DAPHNE HELLMAN** also drops by on Tuesdays.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—A hallowed basement of a jazz club. Guitarist **LARRY CORYELL** works with pianist **STANLEY COWELL,** bassist **GEORGE MRAZ,** and drummer **BILLY HART** through Sunday, Sept. 16, and on Tuesday, Sept. 18, guitarist **KENNY BURRELL** will descend the stairs with his trio. The **MEL LEWIS BIG BAND** is Monday's tradition. Music from ten.

West Boondock, 114 Tenth Ave., at 17th St. (929-9645)—Devoted patrons have sought this place out for years, and it is perhaps the best jazz club in the meat-packing district. One attraction is the authentically prepared collard greens; another is the warm atmosphere. The musicians: Samir Safwat is here Mondays through Wednesdays, and Ted Chavis and Bob Hobson perform Thursdays through Sundays. Music from eight-thirty until two.

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West End, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—Past the steam tables of piping-hot student food, beyond the pinball machines is a room full of mostly swing music. The schedule: Wednesday, Sept. 12, **RAY BARRETTO;** Thursday through Saturday, Sept. 13-15, guitarist **BARNEY KESSEL** and a trio; Sunday, Sept. 16, Chris Hughes & Asch; Monday, Sept. 17, saxophonist **GEORGE KELLY;** Tuesday, Sept. 18, Shelton Gary; Wednesday, Sept. 19, **JERRY GONZALES & THE FORT APACHE BAND;** and Thursday through Saturday, Sept. 20-22, the Dizzy Gillespie-*less* Dizzy Gillespie All-Stars. *Music from about nine.*

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Duos in a town-house restaurant: pianist **ROGER KELLAWAY** and **MICHAEL MOORE** through Saturday, Sept. 15, and starting Tuesday, Sept. 18, pianist **KIRK LIGHTSEY** and bassist **CLINT HOUSTON.** On Sundays, guitarist **GENE BERTONCINI** jams with his longtime partner **MICHAEL MOORE,** and on Mondays Jim Roberts and Brian Torff play together. Music from eight.

JAZZ / FOLK / ROCK CONCERTS, PERSONAL APPEARANCES, ETC.

Patti Labelle—Gershwin Theatre, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 12-13, at 8; Friday, Sept. 14, at 7 and 10; Saturday, Sept. 15, at 8; and Sunday, Sept. 16, at 3 and 7.

Laura Branigan—Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. Friday and Saturday, Sept. 14-15, at 8.

Rick Springfield—With Corey Hart. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 246-4600. Saturday through Monday, Sept. 15-17, at 8.)

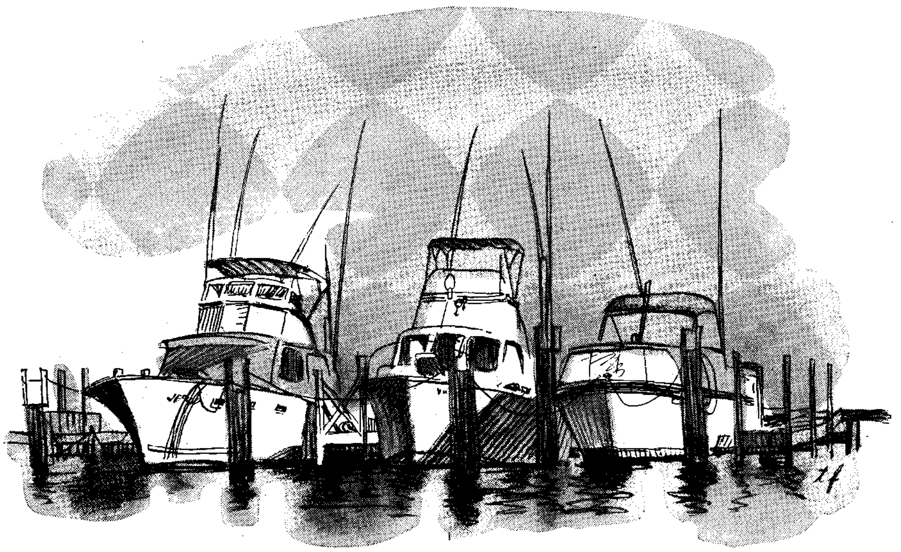
Grupo Aymara—In a program of Bolivian music. (Alternative Museum, 17 White St., three blocks south of Canal St., at Sixth Ave. 966-4444. Saturday, Sept. 15, at 8.)

Rush—With Fastway. (Madison Square Garden. 564-4400. Monday, Sept. 17, at 8.)

Diana Ross—Radio City Music Hall. Wednesday through Saturday, Sept. 19-22, at 8; Sunday, Sept. 23, at 3; and Tuesday, Sept. 25, at 8.

Rostal & Schaefer—Carnegie Hall. 247-7459. Wednesday, Sept. 19, at 8.

Peter Allen—Carnegie Hall. Thursday through Monday, Sept. 20-24, at 8.



Jimmy Rowles Quartet—With Zoot Sims. (Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Saturday, Sept. 22, at 9.)

Irving Plaza—Saturday, Sept. 15, at 11:30: Chris Spedding, with the Rattlers. . . . ¶ Thursday, Sept. 20, at 11:30: Sun Ra and His Solar Arkestra, with Me & I. . . . ¶ Friday, Sept. 21, at 11:30: Sun Ra and His Solar Arkestra, with Barrence Whitfield and the Savages. . . . ¶ Saturday, Sept. 22, at 8 and 11:30: Art Ensemble of Chicago. (Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 477-3728.)

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Walter Darby Bannard—Recent paintings. Through Sept. 29. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

Fanny Brennan—Surrealist paintings on a small scale, the largest four and a half inches by two inches. Through Sept. 29. (Coe Kerr, 49 E. 82nd St. Open Mondays.)

Ida Kohlmeyer—New abstract paintings and sculptures by a New Orleans artist. Through Oct. 6. (Gimpel, 1040 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Henry Moore—Drawings, sculptures, and prints. Through Oct. 31. (Silberberg, 16 E. 79th St. Open Mondays.)

Marjorie Strider—Painted-metal wall sculptures by an American Indian artist. Also, four drawings. Through Oct. 13. (Steinbaum, 903 Madison Ave., at 72nd St.)

Irvin Tepper—Porcelain coffee cups, intentionally flawed in the casting (to give them character), and drawings—of similar cups, a snap-brim hat, a clutching hand—also fractured in appearance. Through Sept. 29. (Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St.)

Group Shows—At the **SCHLESINGER-BOISANTÉ,** 822 Madison Ave., at 69th St.: Paintings and collages by Hannelore Baron, Francesco Clemente, Mario Merz, Henry Moore, and others. Through Friday, Sept. 21. . . . **WILLARD,** 29 E. 72nd St.: Drawings by eleven artists, including Joseph Beuys, Susan Rothenberg, and Jean-Michel Basquiat. Through Oct. 6.

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

Nicholas Africano—New diptychs, with his customary high-relief figures (vastly larger than before) on one side and sketchily painted nudes on the other. Through Sept. 29. (Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.) . . . ¶ In the back room, a group of Picasso paintings and sculptures of women, including a small terra-cotta bust of Jacqueline Roche.

Erik Gunnar Asplund (1885-1940)—Architectural drawings for four projects in his native Sweden, including Stockholm's Woodland Chapel and Cemetery. Through Oct. 6. (Protetch, 37 W. 57th St.)

Louise Bourgeois—New sculptures. Through Oct. 6. (Robert Miller, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Charlotte Brown—A recent series entitled "Flower Gardens," consisting of color-photocopied images cut and pasted onto canvas and handmade paper. Through Oct. 13. (Getler-Pall-Saper, 50 W. 57th St.)

Jack Bush (1909-77)—Acrylic paintings on canvas by a Canadian color-field artist. Through Oct. 6. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Irma Cavat—Still-life oil paintings of simple objects, such as loaves of bread and stacks of boxes. Through Sept. 29. (Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St.)

Roz Chast—Colored drawings by a *New Yorker* artist and original illustrations for her book "Parallel Universes." Through Sept. 29. (Markel, 50 W. 57th St.)

Ronald Davis—Paintings. Through Oct. 6. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Nancy Genn—Twenty-four handmade-paper works. Through Sept. 29. (Crispo, 41 E. 57th St. Tuesdays through Fridays, 11:30 to 4:30; Saturdays, 10:30 to 5:30.)

Nancy Grossman—Recent pencil and charcoal

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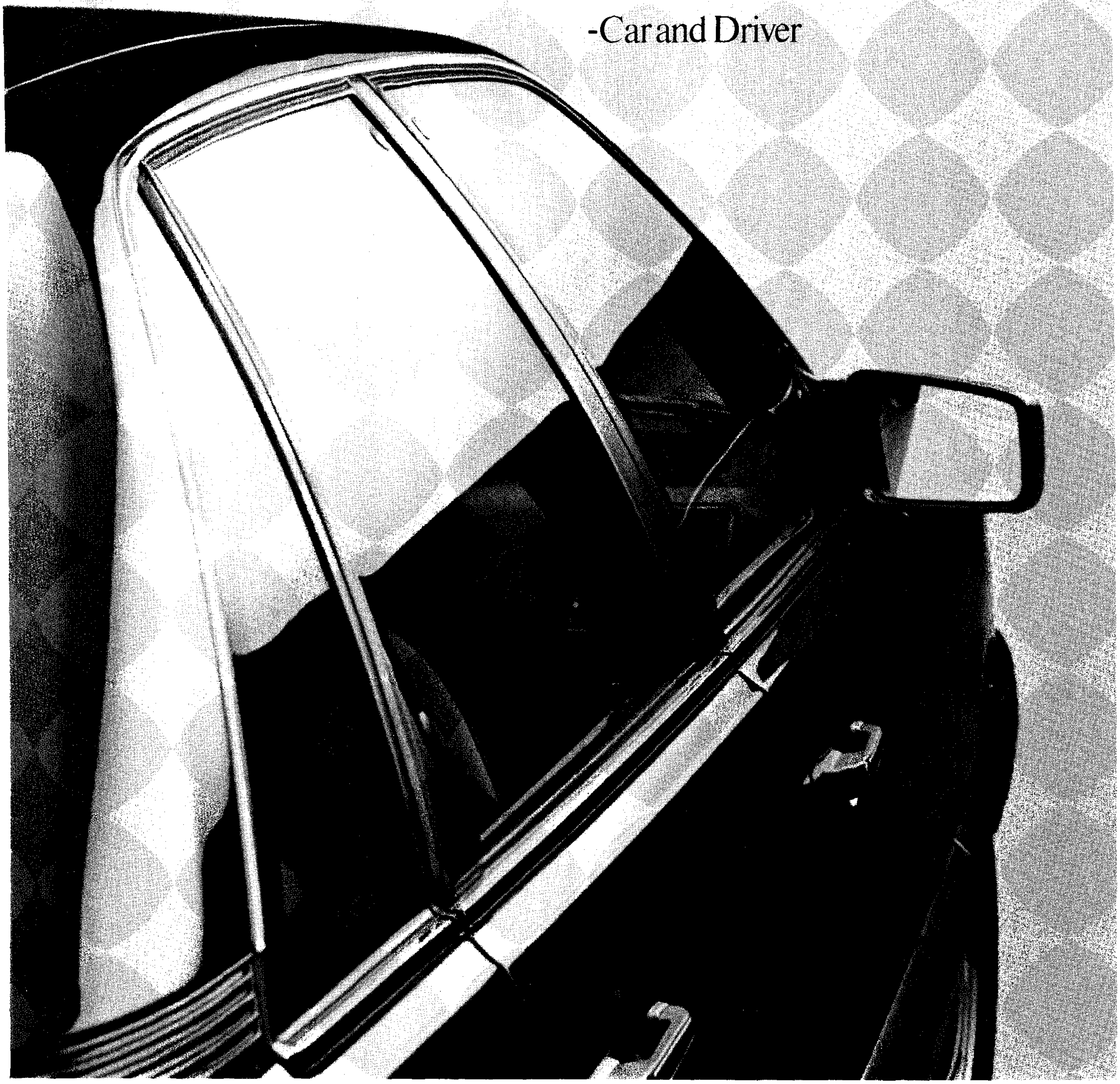

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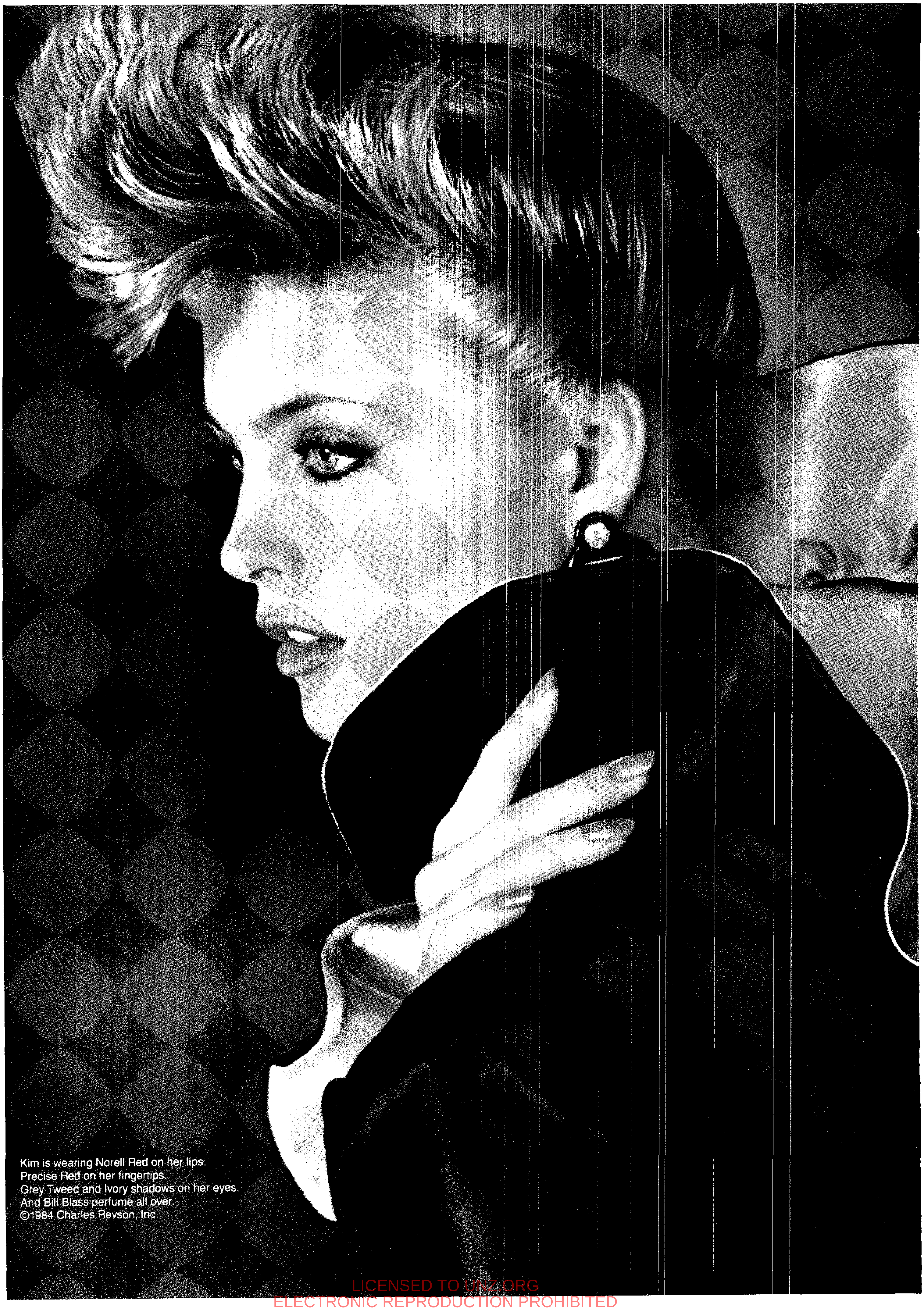

Kim is wearing Norell Red on her lips.
Precise Red on her fingertips.
Grey Tweed and Ivory shadows on her eyes.
And Bill Blass perfume all over.
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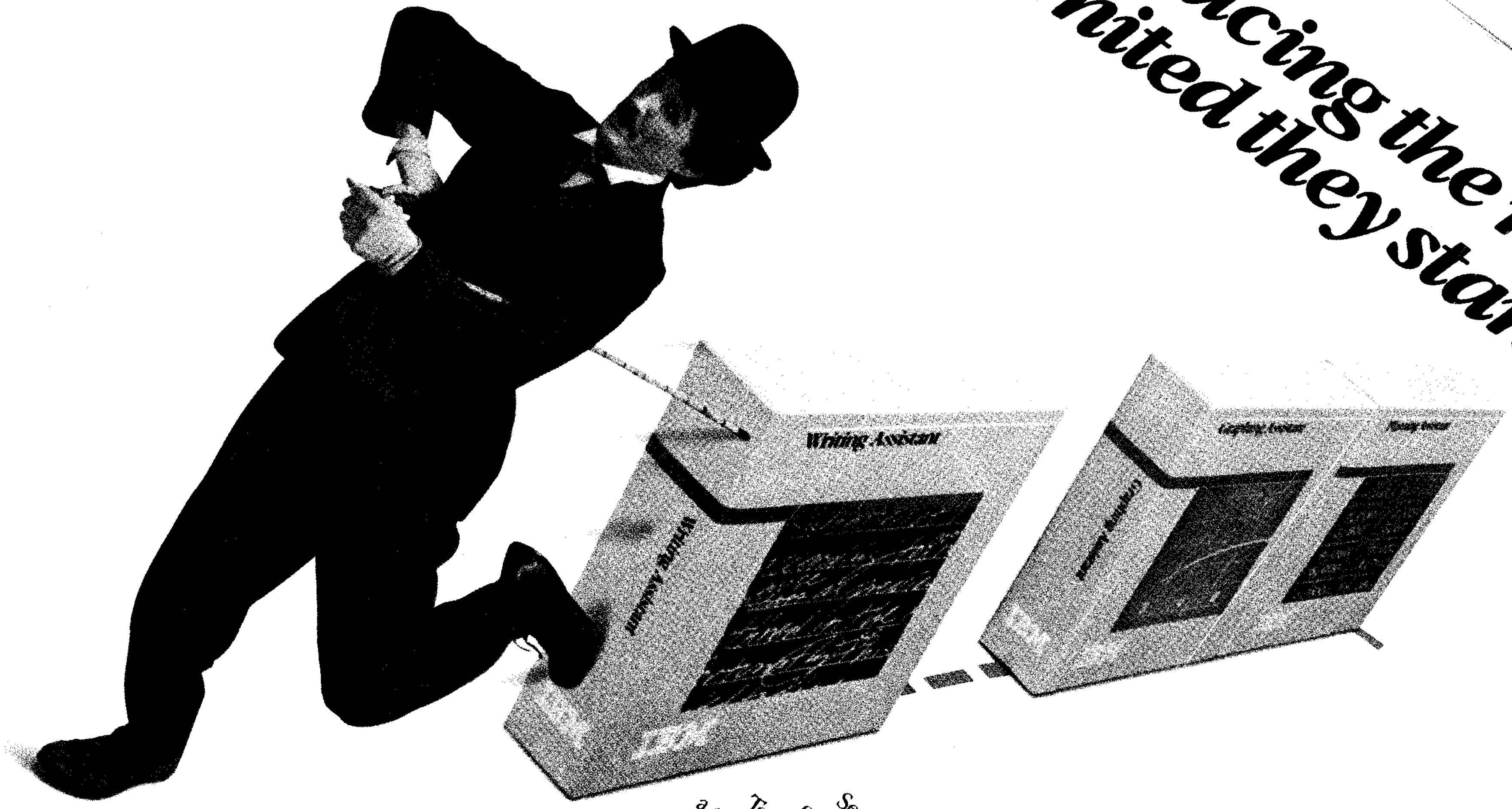

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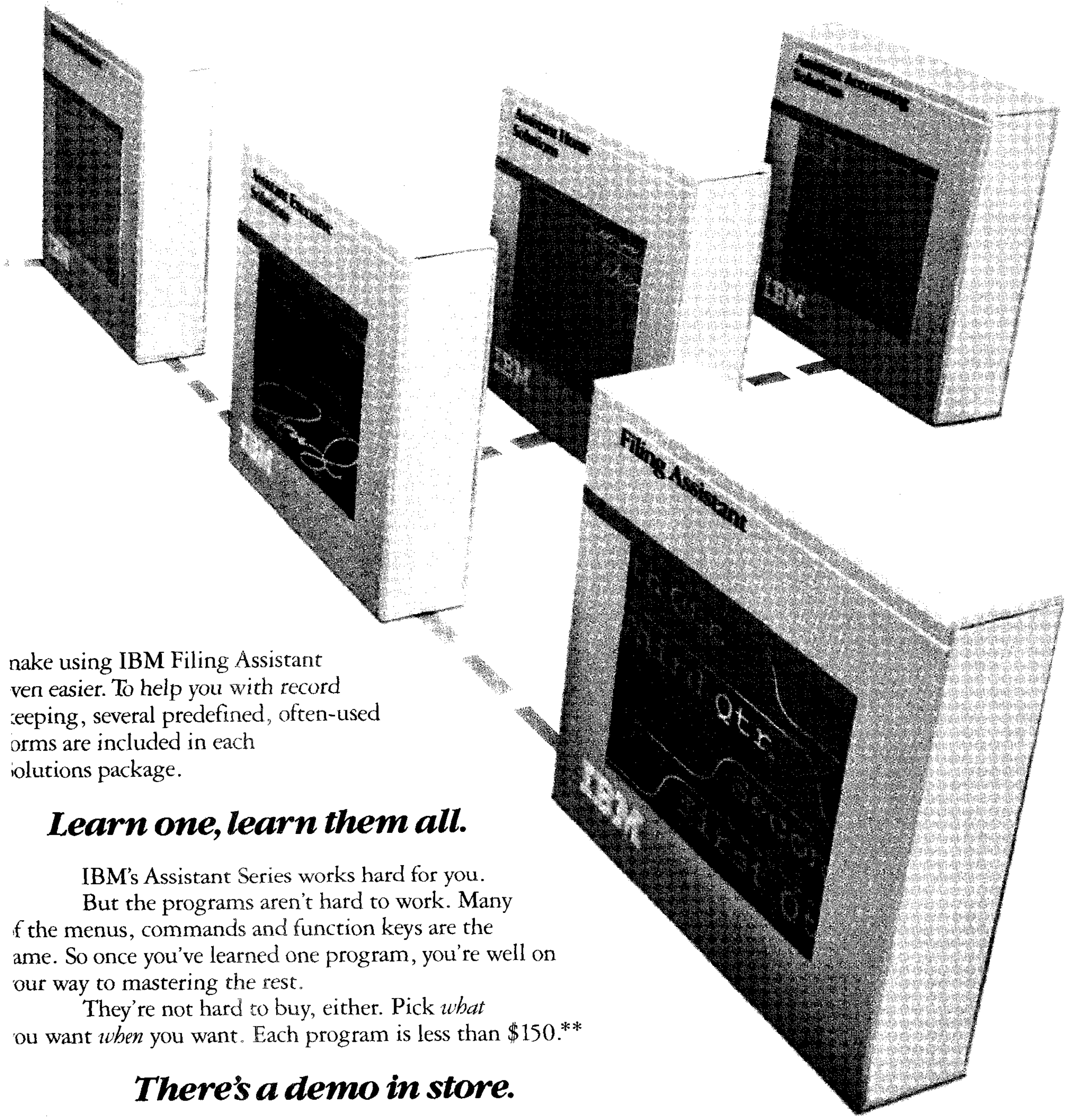

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

drawings of androgynous figures in complex scenarios. Also, a fifteen-foot leather totem. Through Sept. 28. (Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St.)

Lore Riess—Free-hanging abstract paintings on canvas strips. Through Oct. 5. (Heidenberg, 50 W. 57th St.)

Phil Sims—Paintings and drawings. Through Oct. 6. (Oscarsson Hood, 41 W. 57th St.)

Group Shows—At the **schoelkopf,** 50 W. 57th St.: Oils, watercolors, and drawings by early-twentieth-century modernists, including Joseph Stella, Rolph Scarlett, and Manierre Dawson. Through Oct. 3. . . . **siegel,** 24 W. 57th St.: Paintings and sculptures by gallery members Robert Jessup, Maria Scotti, and others, as well as works by guest artists, including Robert McCauley and Milton Resnick. Through Sept. 29. . . . **witkin,** 41 E. 57th St.: British artists, 1843 to 1935, represented by works in a variety of mediums, from a pen-and-ink drawing by Walter Crane to Alvin Langdon Coburn's portrait of George Meredith. Through Oct. 20. (Opens at noon on Saturdays.) . . . **zabriskie,** 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.: Four contemporary sculptors—Paul Bowen, Jeff Mendoza, Mia Westerlund Roosen, and Judith Shea—who share an interest in primitive forms and objects from the past. Through Oct. 6. (Open Mondays.)

GALLERIES—SoHo

Nancy Azara—Totemlike wood sculptures painted in bright colors. Also, six works of handmade paper interwoven with twine and rope. Through Oct. 3. (SoHo 20, at 469 Broome St. Opens at noon.)

Camille Eskell—Figurative works on paper. Through Sept. 26. (First Street Gallery, 386 West Broadway. Opens daily, except Mondays, at noon.)

Diane Farrell—Paintings and drawings influenced by Jungian psychology and dream imagery, including a three-by-four-foot oil inspired by a dream of Mt. Rushmore. Through Saturday, Sept. 22. (A.I.R., 63 Crosby St.)

Markus Lüpertz—Paintings from 1974 to the present. Through Sept. 29. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Tom Parish / Charles Parsons—Large oil paintings of imaginary landscapes. / Abstract sculptures. Through Saturday, Sept. 22. (55 Mercer Street Gallery.)

Group Shows—At the **hoffman,** 429 West Broadway: New paintings and drawings by such artists as Juan Gonzalez, Howard Buchwald, and Joe Nicastri, juxtaposed with early works, some of them done more than ten years ago. Through Sept. 28. . . . **manhattan art,** 81 Greene St.: Paintings and sculptures by Gregory Botts, Lori Goodman, Paul Georges, David Kapp, and others. Through Oct. 6.

OTHER GALLERIES

Mark Kostabi / Grace Graupe-Pillard—New figurative oil paintings. / Recent pastel-on-canvas cutouts of street people. Through Oct. 6. (Bromm, 90 West Broadway, at Chambers St.)

Group Show—Paintings that combine art-history images with popular images, by such artists as Imants Tillers and Robert Rauschenberg. Through Oct. 6. (Bouckaert, 100 Hudson St.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Ansel Adams (1902-84)—A memorial show consisting of more than sixty works by this landscape photographer. Through Oct. 6. (Light, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Brassaï (1899-1984)—Forty prints, among them portraits of Picasso, Matisse, and Braque. Through Oct. 6. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.) . . . ¶ Twenty prints. Starts Thursday, Sept. 13. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Mitch Epstein—Photographs reflecting travels to India and Italy. Through Oct. 3. (Manès, 177 Prince St.)

Barbara Kasten—Abstract photographs derived from constructions the artist made and a construction she made but hasn't photographed. Through Sept. 29. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

Michel Szulc Krzyzanowski—Black-and-white photographs mounted in sequence. Through Sept. 29. (Laurence Miller, 38 E. 57th St.)

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Irving Penn—A retrospective will be mounted at the Museum of Modern Art. See below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—The first large-scale exhibit of Maori tribal artifacts to leave New Zealand consists of close to two hundred objects, such as house posts, fishing implements, musical instruments, weapons, and jewelry—carved in wood, stone, jade, ivory, and shell. . . . ¶ A pair of shows devoted to James McNeill Whistler—a loan of etchings and newly acquired lithographs—will be in adjacent galleries on the second floor. Starts Friday, Sept. 14. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—Irving Penn's photographs from the last four decades constitute an exhibition of about two hundred works. Starts Thursday, Sept. 13. . . . ¶ A second photography show highlights color prints acquired over a five-year period. Artists include Lorie Novak, Jan Groover, and William Eggleston. Through Oct. 30. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A selection of drawings by twentieth-century European artists, including Chagall, Klimt, and Kirchner, taken from the collections. Through Oct. 14. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—More than two hundred prints added to the museum's collection during the past decade, ranging from John Marin's 1911 "Brooklyn Bridge" to lithographs completed this year by Susan Rothenberg and by Terry Winters. Through Nov. 25. . . . ¶ A show of Viola Frey's giant, gaudily painted clay figures. Also, three ceramic plates, a small sculpture, and two large paintings. Through Sept. 30. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—Contemporary color photographs, including Jim Dow's panoramas of empty baseball stadiums, and a French series by Joel Meyerowitz. Through Sept. 30. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

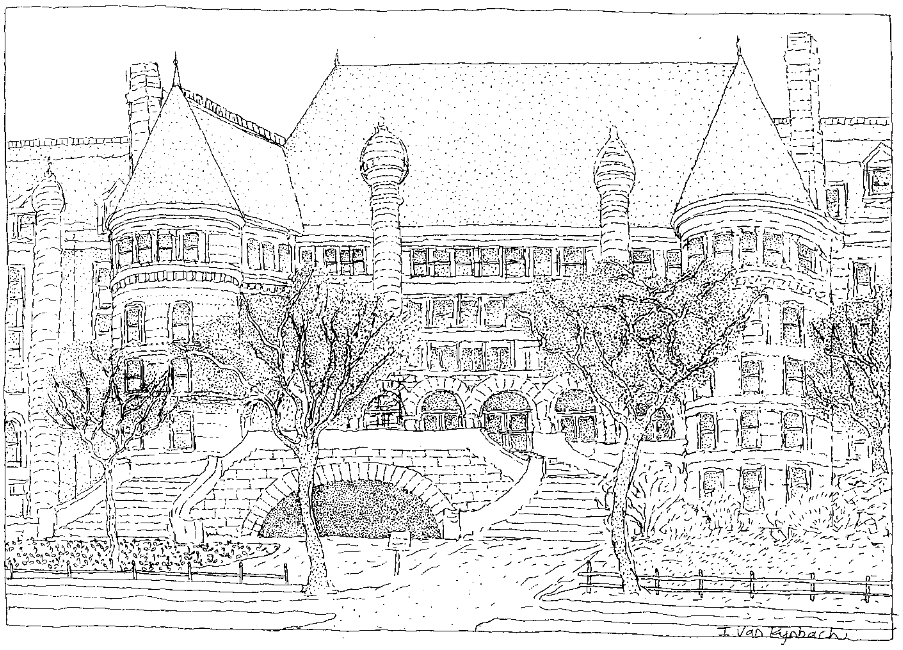
Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Damask fabrics, including Arabic woven *silk from the fourteenth century, white linen* napkins made for Napoleon Bonaparte and for Czar Nicholas II, and red silk designed for French embassies early in this century. Through Nov. 4. . . . ¶ A display of tea services which pays homage to the variety of designs over the centuries. Through Oct. 28. . . . ¶ An architectural exhibit that reviews the changes in skyscraper design in Manhattan between the world wars, and specifically the impact of the 1916 setback zoning law on the city's skyline. Through Sept. 23. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—A show of neoclassical terra-cotta sculptures by the eighteenth-century French artist called Clodion (Claude Michel). All but two of the fifteen pieces are on loan. Through Sept. 30. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—Watercolors and drawings primarily by European artists, including Raphael and Picasso, in a selection from the National Gallery of Ireland. Also, Irish manuscripts from the library's collection—"The Picture of Dorian Gray," by Oscar Wilde, and a page of James Joyce's "Ulysses," for example. . . . ¶ "William Morris: The 150th Anniversary of His Birth"—autograph manuscripts, illuminated manuscripts, photographs, pamphlets, and rare printed editions from his private library, as well as works published by him, including a copy of the Kelmscott "Chaucer." . . . ¶ Landscape etchings by Rembrandt, including "Three Trees" and "The Goldweigher's Field." All shows through Nov. 25. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, 125 W. 55th St.—"The World of Grandma Moses": more than fifty paintings, plus source materials, in an exhibit that points up her stylistic and technical development. Through Oct. 28. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10:30 to 8, with no admission charge *after 5:30; Wednesdays through Sundays,* 10:30 to 5:30.)

National Academy of Design, 1083 Fifth Ave., at 89th St.—A show of paintings, drawings, and prints by American modernist Arthur B. Carles (1882-1952), including early works executed while he was a student of William Merritt Chase and of Thomas Anshutz, and several canvases considered by some to



prefigure Abstract Expressionism. Through Nov. 4. (*Open daily except Mondays. Hours:* Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Censorship: 500 Years of Conflict," an exhibit whose materials include Calvin's "Religious Institutes," Daumier's "Liberty of the Press . . . ," Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," Sanger's "The Woman Rebel," and Orwell's "1984"—each of them once anathema to somebody. First editions, autograph copies, original manuscripts, prints. Through Nov. 5. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 6.)

MUSIC

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 362-1911, and for Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

New York City Opera—Thursday, Sept. 13, at 8: The company's première of Stravinsky's "The Rake's Progress" (in English), with Erie Mills, Joy Davidson, Jerry Hadley, and Frederick Burchinal; conducted by Christopher Keene. . . . ¶ Friday, Sept. 14, at 8: "Madame Butterfly," with Catherine Lamy, Cynthia Rose, Barry McCauley, and William Stone; Christopher Keene. . . . ¶ Saturday, Sept. 15, at 2: "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," with Susanne Mentzer, Stephen Dickson, and Bruce Reed; Scott Bergeson. . . . ¶ Saturday, Sept. 15, at 8: "Turandot," with Linda Kelm, Judith Haddon, Jon Fredric West, and Adib Fazah; Christopher Keene. . . . ¶ Sunday, Sept. 16, at 1: "Rigoletto," with Sheryl Woods, Susanne Marsee, Jerry Hadley, and Frederick Burchinal; Mark Flint. . . . ¶ Sunday, Sept. 16, at 7: "La Rondine," with Elizabeth Knighton, Claudette Peterson, Barry McCauley, and Stanley Wexler; Alessandro Siciliani. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Sept. 18, at 8: "Madame Butterfly," with Catherine Lamy, Cynthia Rose, Barry McCauley, and William Stone; Christopher Keene. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Sept. 19, at 8: "The Rake's Progress" (in English), with Erie Mills, Joy Davidson, Jerry Hadley, and Frederick Burchinal; Christopher Keene. . . . ¶ Thursday, Sept. 20, at 8: "Cavalleria Rusticana," with Viviane Thomas, Alteouise DeVaughn, Riccardo Calleo, and Adib Fazah; and "Pagliacci," with Marianna Christos, Harry Theyard, and Robert Galbraith; Imre Pallo conducting both. . . . ¶ Friday, Sept. 21, at 8: "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," with Susanne Mentzer, Bruce Reed, and Stephen Dickson; Scott Bergeson. . . . ¶ Saturday, Sept. 22, at 2: "Rigoletto," with Sheryl Woods, Susanne Marsee, Jerry Hadley, and Frederick Burchinal; Mark Flint. . . . ¶ Saturday, Sept. 22, at 8: "La Rondine," with Elizabeth Knighton, Claudette Peterson, Barry McCauley, and Stanley Wexler; Alessandro Siciliani. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through Sunday, Nov. 18.)

Amato Opera Company—Presenting "Cavalleria Rusticana" and "Pagliacci." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Saturdays at 7:30 and Sundays at 2:30.)

ORCHESTRAS

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Michael Feldman conducting an all-Bach program. (Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House. Saturday, Sept. 15, at 9.)

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RECITALS

Evan Johnson and Julianne Baird—Baroque violin and soprano, with assisting artists. (Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House. Wednesday, Sept. 12, at 8.)

Maxwell Jarman and Margery Tede—Bass-baritone and mezzo-soprano, in a program that features Maori songs from New Zealand. (Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House. Thursday, Sept. 13, at 8.)

Michel Block—Piano. (Alice Tully Hall. Sunday, Sept. 16, at 3.)

Kun-Woo Paik—Piano, in a benefit recital. (Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House. Tuesday, Sept. 18, at 8.)

New and Newer Music—A program featuring contemporary chamber music by Douglas Anderson and Jerold Ordansky, with Judith Clurman, soprano; Oleg Moston, piano; and Donald Venezia, bassoon. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Tuesday, Sept. 18, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Mendelssohn String Quartet—The first in a series of three concerts presenting Mendelssohn and Schoenberg quartets. (Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House. Wednesday, Sept. 19, at 8.)

Evelyne Brunner—Soprano, with Michel Block, piano. (Alice Tully Hall. Thursday, Sept. 20, at 8.)

Robert de Gaetano—Piano. (Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House. Thursday, Sept. 20, at 8.)

Liesel Soley and Cheryl Seltzer—Violin and piano. (Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, 111 Amsterdam Ave., at 65th St. Friday, Sept. 21, at 4. No tickets necessary.)

Robert Stallman—Flute, with Richard Goode, piano; Dora Schwarzberg, violin; and Toby Hoffman, viola. (Alice Tully Hall. Friday, Sept. 21, at 8.)

Isaac Stern—Violin, with Jean-Bernard Pommier, piano. (Lehman College Concert Hall, the Bronx. 960-8833. Saturday, Sept. 22, at 8.)

MISCELLANY

J. S. Bach: A Musical Offering—Final performances of a festival commemorating the upcoming three-hundredth anniversary of the composer's birth, presented by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, in advance of their regular concert season. At **Bruno Walter Auditorium,** New York Public Library at Lincoln Center: Wednesday, Sept. 12, at 6, a lecture by Christoph Wolff. . . . **Alice Tully Hall:** Wednesday, Sept. 12, at 8, the Academy of Ancient Music Chamber Ensemble, members of the society, and others. . . . ¶ Friday, Sept. 14, at 6, Anthony Newman, organ, in a one-hour recital. . . . ¶ Friday, Sept. 14, at 8:30, Fortunato Arico and Richard Taruskin, viola da gamba; members of the society; and others. . . . ¶ Saturday, Sept. 15, at 6, Gillian Weir, organ, in a one-hour recital. . . . ¶ Saturday, Sept. 15, at 8:30, Arleen Augur, soprano; Jane Bunnell, mezzo-soprano; John Aler, tenor; Ben Holt, baritone; members of the society; and others. (For information about tickets, call 362-1911.)

The Grand Harp Event—Thirty harpists, performing a program of music by John Cage, Wendy Chambers, and Charlie Morrow. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Saturday, Sept. 22, at 4. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

SPORTS

Baseball—**Mets** at Shea Stadium: Vs. Pittsburgh, Wednesday, Sept. 12, at 7:35, and Thursday, Sept. 13, at 1:35. . . . ¶ Montreal, Friday, Sept. 21, at 8:05, and Saturday, Sept. 22, at 1:35. . . . **Yankees** at Yankee Stadium: Vs. Boston, Friday, Sept. 14, at 8, and Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 15-16, at 2. . . . ¶ Baltimore, Monday through Wednesday, Sept. 17-19, at 8.

College Football—**Saturday, Sept. 15:** Army vs. Colgate, at West Point, at 2. . . . ¶ Rutgers vs. Temple, at Piscataway, at 1:30. . . . **Saturday, Sept. 22:** Brown vs. Yale, at Providence, at 1:30. . . . ¶ Columbia vs. Harvard, at Baker Field, at 1. . . . ¶ Cornell vs. Princeton, at Ithaca, at 1:30. . . . ¶ Dartmouth vs. Pennsylvania, at Hanover, at 1:30. . . . ¶ Fordham vs. the United States Merchant Marine Academy, at Fordham, at 1:30. . . . ¶ Syracuse vs. Rutgers, at Syracuse, at 7:30.

Professional Football—Sunday, Sept. 16: Jets vs. Cincinnati Bengals, at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands, at 1, and Giants vs. Washington Redskins, at Washington.

Racing—At **Belmont:** Mondays and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 1, and Sundays at 1:05; through Monday, Oct. 22. The Astarita, Wednesday, Sept. 12; the Woodward and the Futurity, Saturday, Sept. 15; the Flower Bowl Handicap, Sunday, Sept. 16; and the Turf Classic, Saturday, Sept. 22. (Frequent trains leave Penn Station for the track Mondays and Wednesdays through Fridays between 10:45 and 1:10, and Saturdays and Sundays between 11 and 1:19.) . . . **Meadowlands:** Weeknights at 8; through Monday, Dec. 31. The Pegasus, Saturday, Sept. 15.

Running—The Fifth Avenue Mile will start at 3 on Saturday, Sept. 22, at 82nd Street and finish at 62nd Street.

Soccer—Cosmos vs. Golden Bay. (Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. Wednesday, Sept. 12, at 9. For information about tickets, call 1-201 460-7100.)

Trotting—At Roosevelt Raceway, Westbury: Weeknights at 8; through Saturday, Nov. 3.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Music Festival on the Pier—Final concerts in the Miller beer people's summertime series. Wednesday, Sept. 12, at 7:30: Jefferson Starship. . . . ¶ Friday, Sept. 14, at 7:30: The Alarm. (Pier 84, Twelfth Ave. at 45th St. For information about tickets, call 249-8870.)

Washington Square Outdoor Art Exhibit—The semiannual show will be on view Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 15-16, from noon until sundown.

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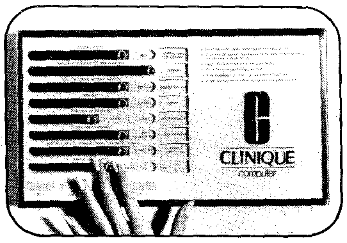

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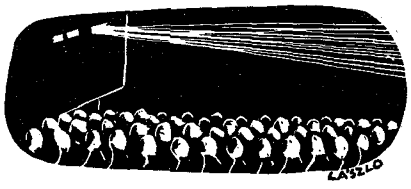

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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 22.

EAST SIDE

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171; theatre opens in the late afternoon and is closed Mondays.)
"Scarface" (1932 †).

R.K.O. Century Art, 36 E. 8th. (473-7014)
"Purple Rain" (†).

St. Marks Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 8th. (533-9292)
Through Sept. 13: "Gremlins" (†); and "Police Academy" (directed by Hugh Wilson), with Steve Guttenberg and Kim Cattrall.
Sept. 14-20: "Red Dawn" (John Milius), with Patrick Swayze and C. Thomas Howell; and "The Year of Living Dangerously" (†).
From Sept. 21: To be announced.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
Through Sept. 13: "C.H.U.D." (Douglas Cheek), with John Heard and Daniel Stern.
From Sept. 14: To be announced.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
Through Sept. 13: "Bachelor Party" (Neal Israel), with Tom Hanks and Adrian Zmed.
From Sept. 14: "The Karate Kid" (John G. Avildsen), with Ralph Macchio and Noriyuki (Pat) Morita.

Murray Hill, 160 E. 34th. (685-7652)
"Tightrope" (Richard Tuggle), with Clint Eastwood and Geneviève Bujold.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Ghostbusters" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Woman in Red" (Gene Wilder), with Wilder and Charles Grodin.
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 13: "Bolero" (John Derek), with Bo Derek. From Sept. 14: To be announced.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
Through Sept. 13: "Flashpoint" (William Tannen), with Kris Kristofferson and Treat Williams.
From Sept. 14: "Careful He Might Hear You" (Carl Schultz; an Australian film), with Wendy Hughes and Robyn Nevin.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Bolero" (John Derek), with Bo Derek.

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Sept. 12: "Purple Rain" (†).
From Sept. 13: "The Woman in Red" (Gene Wilder), with Wilder and Charles Grodin.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Dreamscape" (Joseph Ruben), with Dennis Quaid and Kate Capshaw.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"A Joke of Destiny" (Lina Wertmüller; in Italian), with Ugo Tognazzi.

Manhattan I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Tightrope" (Richard Tuggle), with Clint Eastwood and Geneviève Bujold.
Theatre 2: Sept. 12: "Flashpoint" (William Tannen), with Kris Kristofferson and Treat Williams. From Sept. 13: "Purple Rain" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 13: "The Karate Kid" (John G. Avildsen), with Ralph Macchio and Noriyuki (Pat) Morita. From Sept. 14: "A Soldier's Story" (Norman Jewison), with Howard E. Rollins, Jr., and Adolph Caesar.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 20: "Love Streams" (John Cassavetes), with Cassavetes and Gena Rowlands. From Sept. 21: "Places in the Heart" (Robert Benton), with Sally Field and Lindsay Crouse.

D. W. Griffith, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"The Last Winter" (Riki Shelach), with Kathleen Quinlan.

Cinema I and II, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022/0774)
Theatre 1: "The Bostonians" (†).
Theatre 2: "Another Country" (Marek Kanievska), with Rupert Everett.

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 20: "The Jigsaw Man" (Terence Young), with Laurence Olivier and Michael Caine. From Sept. 21: "All of Me" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 20: "Cal" (Pat O'Connor), with Helen Mirren and John Lynch. From Sept. 21: "Windy City" (Armyan Bernstein), with John Shea, Kate Capshaw, and Josh Mostel.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
Sept. 12: "The Woman in Red" (Gene Wilder), with Wilder and Charles Grodin.
From Sept. 13: "Utu" (Geoff Murphy; a New Zealand film), with Anzac Wallace and Bruno Lawrence.

Loews New York Twin I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" (†).
Theatre 2: "Ghostbusters" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"The Gods Must Be Crazy" (Jamie Uys).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
Sept. 12: Theatre closed.
Sept. 13-18: "Phar Lap" (Simon Wincer), with Tom Burlinson.
From Sept. 19: "Amadeus" (Miloš Forman), with F. Murray Abraham and Tom Hulce.

72nd Street East, 1st Ave. at 72nd. (288-9304)
Through Sept. 13: "Red Dawn" (John Milius), with Patrick Swayze and C. Thomas Howell.
From Sept. 14: "Careful He Might Hear You" (Carl Schultz; an Australian film), with Wendy Hughes and Robyn Nevin.

U. A. 85th St. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Tightrope" (Richard Tuggle), with Clint Eastwood and Geneviève Bujold.

Loews Orpheum I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 13: "C.H.U.D." (Douglas Cheek), with John Heard and Daniel Stern. From Sept. 14: To be announced.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 13: "Ninja Mission" (Mats Helge), with Christopher Kohlberg. From Sept. 14: To be announced.

86th St. East, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Through Sept. 13: "Flashpoint" (William Tannen), with Kris Kristofferson and Treat Williams.
From Sept. 14: "The Karate Kid" (John G. Avildsen), with Ralph Macchio and Noriyuki (Pat) Morita.

R.K.O. Century 86th St. Twin, Lexington at 86th. (289-8900)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 13: "Bolero" (John Derek), with Bo Derek. From Sept. 14: "Exterminator 2" (Mark Buntzman).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 20: "Purple Rain" (†). From Sept. 21: "All of Me" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum I and 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, threatre opens in the late afternoon.)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 18: "American Pictures, Part I" (1981; directed by Jacob Holdt). From Sept. 19: "Bona" (1980; Lino Brocka; a Filipino film, in Tagalog).
Theatre 2: "Once Upon a Time in the West" (1969; Sergio Leone), with Henry Fonda, Claudia Cardinale, and Jason Robards.

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Ghostbusters" (†).
Theatre 2: "The 4th Man" (†).

Greenwich Playhouse I and 2, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "The Woman in Red" (Gene Wilder), with Wilder and Charles Grodin.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 20: "The Last Winter" (Riki Shelach), with Kathleen Quinlan. From Sept. 21: "Until September" (Richard Marquand), with Karen Allen and Thierry Lhermitte.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 13: "Bolero" (John Derek), with Bo Derek. From Sept. 14: "Improper Conduct" (Nestor Almendros and Orlando Jiménez-Leal; in French and Spanish), a documentary.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 13: "Sugar Cane Alley" (Euzhan Palcy; in French). From Sept. 14: "After the Rehearsal" (Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Erland Josephson and Ingrid Thulin.
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 20: "The Jigsaw Man" (Terence Young), with Laurence Olivier and Michael Caine. From Sept. 21: "All of Me" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Sept. 20: "Eréndira" (†). From Sept. 21: "All of Me" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
Through Sept. 13: "Star Trek III: The Search for Spock" (†).
From Sept. 14: "A Soldier's Story" (Norman Jewison), with Howard E. Rollins, Jr., and Adolph Caesar.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
Through Sept. 13: "The Karate Kid" (John G. Avildsen), with Ralph Macchio and Noriyuki (Pat) Morita.
From Sept. 14: "Lawrence of Arabia" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (757-2715)
"The Ballad of Narayama" (Shohei Imamura; in Japanese).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Metropolis" (†).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
Through Sept. 13: "Careful He Might Hear You" (Carl Schultz; an Australian film), with Wendy Hughes and Robyn Nevin.
From Sept. 14: "Swann in Love" (Volker Schlöndorff; in French), with Jeremy Irons and Ornella Muti.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"The Return of Martin Guerre" (1983; Daniel Vigne; in French), with Gérard Depardieu and Nathalie Baye.

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
Through Sept. 18: "The Woman in Red" (Gene Wilder), with Wilder and Charles Grodin.
From Sept. 19: "Amadeus" (Miloš Forman), with F. Murray Abraham and Tom Hulce.

Lincoln Plaza I, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Full Moon in Paris" (Eric Rohmer; in French).
Theatre 2: "First Name: Carmen" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 13: "Life Is a Bed of Roses" (Alain Resnais; in French), with Vittorio Gassman. From Sept. 14: "The Family Game" (Yoshimitsu Morita; in Japanese).

Cinema Studio I and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 19: "Entre Nous" (†). From Sept. 20: "Bizet's Carmen" (Francesco Rosi; in French), with Placido Domingo and Julia Migenes-Johnson.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 19: "In the White City" (Alain Tanner; in Portuguese, French, and English, with English subtitles), with Bruno Ganz. From Sept. 20: "Entre Nous" (†).

Embassy 72nd St. I and 2, B'way at 72nd. (724-6745)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 13: "Old Enough" (Marisa Silver). From Sept. 14: "The Brother from Another Planet" (John Sayles), with Joe Morton, Dee Dee Bridgewater, and Sayles.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 13: "Last Night at the Alamo" (Eagle Pennell). From Sept. 14: "Old Enough."

Loews 83rd Quad, B'way at 83rd. (877-3190)
Theatre 1: "Ghostbusters" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 13: "C.H.U.D." (Douglas Cheek), with John Heard and Daniel Stern. From Sept. 14: To be announced.
Theatre 3: "Purple Rain" (†).
Theatre 4: "Tightrope" (Richard Tuggle), with Clint Eastwood and Geneviève Bujold.

New Yorker I and 2, B'way at 88th. (580-7900)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 13: "Revenge of the Nerds" (Jeff Kanew), with Robert Carradine and Anthony Edwards. Sept. 14-20: "The Karate Kid" (John G. Avildsen), with

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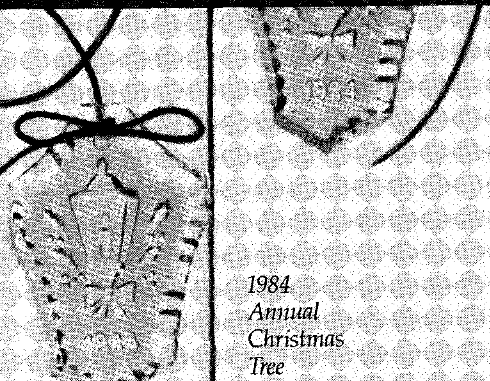

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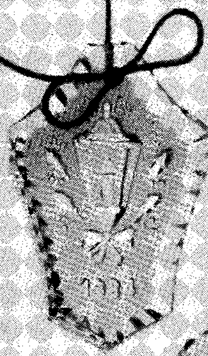

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Ralph Macchio and Noriyuki (Pat) Morita. From Sept. 21: "All of Me" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Woman in Red" (Gene Wilder), with Wilder and Charles Grodin.

Olympia Quad, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 13: "Bolero" (John Derek), with Bo Derek. From Sept. 14: "The Bounty" (†); and "Gorky Park" (Michael Apted), with William Hurt and Lee Marvin.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 13: "The Last Winter" (Riki Shelach), with Kathleen Quinlan. Sept. 14-20: "After the Rehearsal" (Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Erland Josephson and Ingrid Thulin; and "Danton" (†). From Sept. 21: "The Evil That Men Do" (J. Lee Thompson), with Charles Bronson and José Ferrer.
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 13: "Gremlins" (†). From Sept. 14: "Purple Rain" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Sept. 13: "The Jigsaw Man" (Terence Young), with Laurence Olivier and Michael Caine. From Sept. 14: "Exterminator 2" (Mark Buntzman).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Theatres, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Bachelor Party" (directed by Neal Israel), with Tom Hanks and Adrian Zmed.
Theatre 2: "Purple Rain" (†).
Theatre 3: "Revenge of the Nerds" (Jeff Kanew), with Robert Carradine and Anthony Edwards.
Theatre 4: "The NeverEnding Story" (Wolfgang Petersen), with Noah Hathaway and Barret Oliver.
Theatre 5: Through Sept. 13: "Homework" (1982; James Beshears), with Joan Collins; and "My Tutor" (1983; George Bowers), with Caren Kaye and Matt Lattanzi. From Sept. 14: "The Being."
Theatre 6: "Bolero" (John Derek), with Bo Derek.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (757-2408)
Through Sept. 13: "Footloose" (†).
From Sept. 14: "The Karate Kid" (John G. Avildsen), with Ralph Macchio and Noriyuki (Pat) Morita.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, B'way at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 2: "Red Dawn" (John Milius), with Patrick Swayze and C. Thomas Howell.
Theatre 3: "Oxford Blues" (Robert Boris), with Rob Lowe.
Theatre 4: Through Sept. 13: "Sheena" (†). From Sept. 14: "The Philadelphia Experiment" (Stewart Raffill), with Michael Paré and Nancy Allen.

Loews Astor Plaza, B'way at 44th. (869-8340)
"Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" (†).

Loews State 1 and 2, B'way at 45th. (575-5060)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 13: "C.H.U.D." (Douglas Cheek), with John Heard and Daniel Stern. From Sept. 14: To be announced.
Theatre 2: "Ghostbusters" (†).

Movieland, B'way at 47th. (757-8320)
"Tightrope" (Richard Tuggle), with Clint Eastwood and Geneviève Bujold.

New Embassy 49th Street, Seventh Ave. at 49th. (757-7003)
"The Jungle Book" (1967), a Walt Disney full-length cartoon.

R.K.O. Century National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Dreamscape" (Joseph Ruben), with Dennis Quaid and Kate Capshaw.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 20: "Flashpoint" (William Tannen), with Kris Kristofferson and Treat Williams. From Sept. 21: "The Evil That Men Do" (J. Lee Thompson), with Charles Bronson and José Ferrer.

R.K.O. Century Warner Twin, B'way at 47th. (975-8369)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 13: "Ninja Mission" (Mats Helge), with Christopher Kohlberg. From Sept. 14: "Exterminator 2" (Mark Buntzman).
Theatre 2: "Gremlins" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Bleecker St. Cinema 1, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560; on Mondays through Thursdays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
Sept. 12: "Il Posto" ("The Sound of Trumpets;" 1961; directed by Ermanno Olmi; in Italian); and "The Fiancés" (1963; Ermanno Olmi; in Italian).
Sept. 13: "The Night Porter" (1974; Liliana Cavani), with Dirk Bogarde and Charlotte Rampling; and "Beyond Good and Evil" (1984; Liliana Cavani; in Italian), with Erland Josephson and Dominique Sanda.
Sept. 14-20: A program of films directed by King Hu entitled "Zen and the Martial Arts."
From Sept. 21: To be announced.

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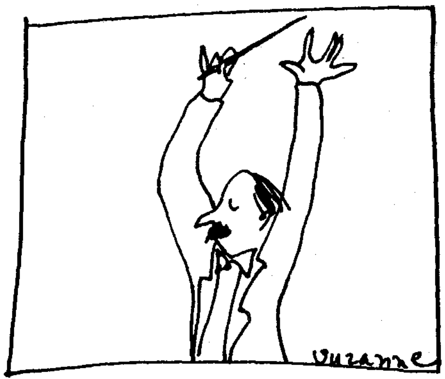
Bleecker St. Cinema 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560; on Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
Through Sept. 20: "Breathless" (1959; Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo.
From Sept. 21: "Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!" (1966; Russ Meyer).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. at 57th. (757-2131)
Sept. 12: "And Quiet Flows the Don" (1957; Sergei Gerasimov; in Russian).
Sept. 13: "Alexander Nevsky" (1938; Sergei Eisenstein; in Russian), with Nikolai Cherkassov; and "Don Quixote" (1957; Grigori Kozintsev; in Russian), with Nikolai Cherkassov.
Sept. 14-20: "8½" (1963; Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni, Anouk Aimée, Sandra Milo, and Claudia Cardinale; and "L'Age d'Or" (1930; Luis Buñuel; in French), with Gaston Modot.
From Sept. 21: To be announced.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through Sept. 13: "Yojimbo" (1961) and "Sanjuro" (1963), both films in Japanese, directed by Akira Kurosawa, with Toshiro Mifune.
Sept. 14-15: "Tender Mercies" (1983; Bruce Beresford), with Robert Duvall, Tess Harper, Ellen Barkin, and Betty Buckley; and "The Great Santini" ("The Ace;" 1980; Lewis John Carlino), with Robert Duvall, Blythe Danner, and Michael O'Keefe.
Sept. 16-18: "The Red Shoes" (1948; Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger), with Moira Shearer and Léonide Massine; and "Tales of Hoffmann" (1951; Michael Powell), with Moira Shearer, Léonide Massine, and Robert Helpmann.
Sept. 19-20: "Caligula" (1980), with Malcolm McDowell.
Sept. 21-22: "Harold and Maude" (1971; Hal Ashby), with Ruth Gordon and Bud Cort; and "King of Hearts" (1967; Philippe de Broca; in French and English), with Alan Bates and Geneviève Bujold.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
"Repo Man" (†).

Hollywood Twin Cinema 1, 8th Ave. at 47th. (246-0717)
Sept. 12: "The Man Who Could Work Miracles" (1937; Lothar Mendes), with Roland Young, Ralph Richardson, Ernest Thesiger, and George Sanders; and "Things to Come" (1936; William Cameron Menzies), with Raymond Massey and Ralph Richardson.
Sept. 13-15: "Caligula" (1980), with Malcolm McDowell.
Sept. 16-17: "The Dark Crystal" (1982; Jim Henson and Frank Oz); and "The Lord of the Rings" (1978; Ralph Bakshi), an animated film.
Sept. 18-19: "The Benny Goodman Story" (1956; Valentine Davies), with Steve Allen; "The Glenn Miller Story" (†); and "The Eddy Duchin Story" (1956; George Sidney), with Tyrone Power, Kim Novak, and Victoria Shaw.
Sept. 20-22: "The King of Comedy" (1983; Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro and Jerry Lewis; and "Diner" (1982; Barry Levinson), with Daniel Stern, Steve Guttenberg, Mickey Rourke, and Ellen Barkin.



Hollywood Twin Cinema 2, 8th Ave. at 47th. (246-0717)
Through Sept. 13: "Meatballs" (1979; Ivan Reitman), with Bill Murray; "Easy Money" (1983; James Signorelli), with Rodney Dangerfield; and ". . . All the Marbles" (1981; Robert Aldrich), with Peter Falk and Burt Young.
Sept. 14-15: "Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes" (1984; Hugh Hudson), with Christopher Lambert and Ralph Richardson; and "Quest for Fire" (1982; Jean-Jacques Annaud), with Everett McGill.
Sept. 16: "The Lady from Shanghai" (1948; Orson Welles), with Rita Hayworth, Everett Sloane, and Welles; "Pal Joey" (1957; George Sidney), with Rita Hayworth, Frank Sinatra, and Kim Novak; and "Miss Sadie Thompson" (†).
Sept. 17-18: "Carnal Knowledge" (†); and "The Graduate" (1967; Mike Nichols), with Dustin Hoffman, Anne Bancroft, and Katharine Ross.
Sept. 19-20: "Baby, It's You" (1983; John Sayles), with Rosanna Arquette and Vincent Spano; and "Lianna" (1983; John Sayles).
Sept. 21-22: "Midnight Express" (†); and "Yol" (1982; Yilmaz Güney; in Turkish).

Metro Cinema, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Sept. 12: "The Kid" (1921; Charlie Chaplin), with Chaplin, Jackie Coogan, and Carl Miller; and four short films made by Chaplin—"The Idle Class" (1921), "Pay Day" (1922), "Sunnyside" (1919), and "A Day's Pleasure" (1919).
Sept. 13: "Limelight" (1952; Charlie Chaplin), with Chaplin and Claire Bloom; and four short films made by Chaplin in 1917—"The Immigrant," "The Cure," "The Adventurer," and "Easy Street."
Sept. 14: "Harold and Maude" (1971; Hal Ashby), with Ruth Gordon and Bud Cort; and "King of Hearts" (1967; Philippe de Broca; in French and English), with Alan Bates and Geneviève Bujold.
Sept. 15-16: "Fanny and Alexander" (1983; Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish); and "A Day in the Country" (1937; Jean Renoir; in French).
Sept. 17: "Accattone!" (1961; Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian); and "The Hawks and the Sparrows" (1967; Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian), with Totò.
Sept. 18: "Breakfast at Tiffany's" (1961; Blake Edwards), with Audrey Hepburn, George Peppard, Patricia Neal, Martin Balsam, and Mickey Rooney; and "Two for the Road" (†).
Sept. 19: "Memories of Underdevelopment" (1973; Tomás Gutiérrez Alea; a Cuban film, in Spanish), with Sergio Corrieri; and "Before the Revolution" (1964; Bernardo Bertolucci; in Italian), with Adriana Asti.
Sept. 20: "Coup de Torchon" (†); and "Le Crabe Tambour" (1977; Pierre Schoendoerffer; in French), with Jean Rochefort.
Sept. 21: "The Night of the Shooting Stars" (1983; Paolo and Vittorio Taviani; in Italian), with Omero Antonutti; and "The Spider's Stratagem" (1970; Bernardo Bertolucci; in Italian).
Sept. 22: "Citizen Kane" (1941; Orson Welles), with Welles, Joseph Cotten, Dor-

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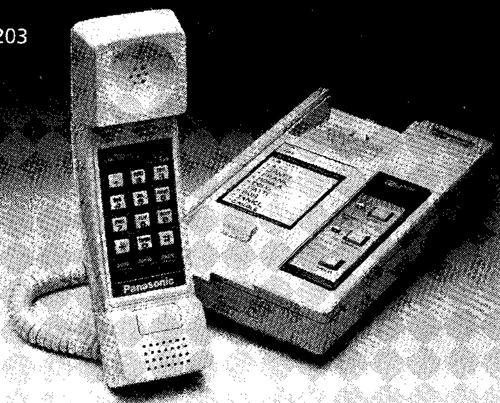
KX-T 3203



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othy Comingore, Agnes Moorehead, and Everett Sloane; and "Touch of Evil" (1958; Orson Welles), with Welles, Charlton Heston, and Janet Leigh.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

Sept. 12: "Million Dollar Legs" (1932; Edward Cline), with W. C. Fields, Jack Oakie, and Ben Turpin; and "If I Had a Million" (1932), with an all-star cast, including Gary Cooper, Charles Laughton, and W. C. Fields.

Sept. 13-15: "Manhattan Melodrama" (1934; W. S. Van Dyke), with Clark Gable and William Powell; and "After Office Hours" (1935; Robert Z. Leonard), with Clark Gable and Constance Bennett.

Sept. 16-17: "Three Comrades" (†) and "Mannequin" (†).

Sept. 18-19: "The Pride of the Yankees" (1942; Sam Wood), with Gary Cooper, Teresa Wright, Walter Brennan, and Dan Duryea; and "The Show-Off" (1934; Charles Reisner), with Spencer Tracy and Madge Evans.

Sept. 20-22: "Sleuth" (†).

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (222-3370)

Sept. 12: "Trouble in Paradise" (1932; Ernst Lubitsch), with Kay Francis, Herbert Marshall, Miriam Hopkins, and Edward Everett Horton; and "My Man Godfrey" (1936; Gregory La Cava), with Carole Lombard, William Powell, Mischa Auer, and Alice Brady.

Sept. 13: "Out of the Past" (1947; Jacques Tourneur), with Jane Greer, Robert Mitchum, Kirk Douglas, and Rhonda Fleming; and "Nightmare Alley" (1947; Edmund Goulding), with Tyrone Power, Joan Blondell, and Ian Keith.

Sept. 14-15: "Death Watch" (1980; Bertrand Tavernier; in French), with Harry Dean Stanton, Romy Schneider, Harvey Keitel, and Max von Sydow; and "Alphaville" (1965; Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Eddie Constantine, Anna Karina, and Akim Tamiroff. On Saturday, Sept. 15, at 11 A.M., parts 3 and 4 of "Berlin Alexanderplatz" (1980; Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German) will be shown.

Sept. 16: "Stormy Weather" (1943; Andrew Stone), with Bill Robinson, Fats Waller, Cab Calloway, and Dooley Wilson; and "Jazz! Jazz! Jazz!," a program of jazz artists on film.

Sept. 17: "Berlin Alexanderplatz" (1980; Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German). Parts 5 and 6 will be shown.

Sept. 18: "The Dead Zone" (1983; David Cronenberg), with Christopher Walken and Brooke Adams; and "Brainstorm" (1983; Douglas Trumbull), with Christopher Walken and Natalie Wood.

Sept. 19: "Paisan" (†); and "Adventures of St. Francis" (1950; Roberto Rossellini; in Italian).

Sept. 20: "Pickup on South Street" (1953; Samuel Fuller), with Richard Widmark, Jean Peters, and Thelma Ritter; "The Crimson Kimono" (1959; Samuel Fuller), with Victoria Shaw, Glenn Corbett, and James Shigeta; and "The Naked Kiss" (1965; Samuel Fuller), with Constance Towers.

Sept. 21: "Susana" (1951; Luis Buñuel; a Mexican film, in Spanish); and "Demons in the Garden" (1984; Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón; in Spanish), with Angela Molina.

Sept. 22: "Walkabout" (1971; Nicolas Roeg); and "Gallipoli" (†).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Sept. 12: "The Postman Always Rings Twice" (1946; Tay Garnett), with Lana Turner, John Garfield, Cecil Kellaway, Hume Cronyn, and Leon Ames; and "They Made Me a Criminal" (1939; Busby Berkeley), with John Garfield, May Robson, Gloria Dickson, and the Dead End Kids.

Sept. 13: "Mon Oncle" (1958) and "Mr. Hulot's Holiday" (1953), both films in French, directed by, and with, Jacques Tati.

Sept. 14: "Dark Passage" (1947; Delmer Daves), with Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, and Agnes Moorehead; and "To Have and Have Not" (1944; Howard Hawks), with Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, and Walter Brennan.

Sept. 15: "The Third Man" (1950; Carol Reed), with Orson Welles, Joseph Cotten, Alida Valli, and Trevor Howard; and "The Trial" (1963; Orson Welles), with Anthony Perkins, Jeanne Moreau, Suzanne Flon, Elsa Martinelli, and Romy Schneider.

Sept. 16: "Suddenly, Last Summer" (1959; Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Elizabeth Taylor, Montgomery Clift, and Katharine Hepburn; and "Holiday" (1938; George Cukor), with Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant, Lew Ayres, Edward Everett Horton, and Doris Nolan.

Sept. 17: "The Threepenny Opera" (1931; G. W. Pabst; in German), with Lotte Lenya; and "The Blue Angel" (†).

Sept. 18: "Fury" (1936; Fritz Lang), with Spencer Tracy, Sylvia Sidney, Edward Ellis, and Walter Brennan; and "Man Hunt" (†).

Sept. 19: "Too Many Husbands" (1940; Wesley Ruggles), with Fred MacMurray, Jean Arthur, and Melvyn Douglas; and "The More the Merrier" (1943; George Stevens), with Jean Arthur, Joel McCrea, and Charles Coburn.

Sept. 20: "Ziegfeld Girl" (†); and "The Bad and the Beautiful" (1953; Vincente Minnelli), with Lana Turner, Kirk Douglas, Dick Powell, and Gloria Grahame.

Sept. 21-22: "The 39 Steps" (1935; Alfred Hitchcock), with Madeleine Carroll, Robert Donat, Godfrey Tearle, Peggy Ashcroft, and John Laurie; and "The Lady Vanishes" (1938; Alfred Hitchcock), with Dame May Whitty, Margaret Lockwood, Michael Redgrave, Paul Lukas, and Cecil Parker.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Auditorium 2, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Sept. 13 at noon, 1:30, 3, 4:30, 6, and 7: A program of the 1984 winners of the British Advertising Broadcast Awards.... ¶ Sept. 14 at 2:30: "The Song of Lisbon" (1933; directed by Cottinelli Telmo; in Portuguese, with English subtitles), with Vasco Santana, Teresa Gomes, and Manoel de Oliveira.... ¶ Sept. 14 at 6: "The May Revolution" (1937; António Lopes Ribeiro; in Portuguese, with English subtitles), with Maria Clara, António Martinez, and Emília de Oliveira.... ¶ Sept. 15 at 2:30: "Mountain Wolves" (1942; Jorge Brum Canto; in Portuguese with English subtitles), with António Sousa, Maria Domingas, and António Silva.... ¶ Sept. 15 at 5: "The Green Years" (1963; Paulo Rocha; in Portuguese, with English subtitles), with Isabel Ruth, Rui Gomes, and Ruy Furtado. ... ¶ Sept. 16 at 2:30: "Brandos Costumes" (1972-74; Alberto Seixas Santos; in Portuguese, with English subtitles), with Luís Santos, Dalila Rocha, and Isabel de Castro. ... ¶ Sept. 16 at 5: "A Bee in the Rain" (1973; Fernando Lopes; in Portuguese, with English subtitles), with Laura Soveral, João Guedes, and Zita Duarte.... ¶ Sept. 17 at 2:30: "The May Revolution." ... ¶ Sept. 17 at 6: "The Song of Lisbon." ... ¶ Sept. 18 at 2:30: "Brandos Costumes." ... ¶ Sept. 18 at 6: "The Green Years." ... ¶ Sept. 20 at 2:30: "A Bee in the Rain." ... ¶ Sept. 20 at 6: "Mountain Wolves." ... ¶ Sept. 21 at 2:30: A program of six short films.... ¶ Sept. 21 at 6: A program of animated films.... ¶ Sept. 22 at 2:30: "The Fall of Troy" (1910; Giovanni Pastrone; a silent film) and "China Express; Blue Express" (1929; Ilya Trauberg; a silent film).... ¶ Sept. 22 at 5: Another program of animated films. (A limited number of tickets are available to those applying for them in person at the museum after 11 on the day of the showing.)

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—A survey of American independent films, 1958-64. Sept. 20-22 showing at noon: "Cry of Jazz" (1958; Ed Bland) and "Come Back Africa" (1958; Lionel Rogosin); and showing at 3: program to be announced.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN THESE PAGES DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

All of Me—With Steve Martin and Lily Tomlin, directed by Carl Reiner. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Gemini, R.K.O. Century 86th St. Twin, Quad Cinema, and New Yorker; starting Sept. 21.)

The Blue Angel (1929)—The director Josef von Sternberg had been working in Hollywood for more than fifteen years when he went to Germany, at Emil Jannings' request, to direct this film; he had directed Jannings in "The Last Command," one of the two American silent films that had won Jannings the Academy Award in 1927-28, and Jannings wanted him to guide his first sound film. They set in motion the Marlene Dietrich myth that was eventually to surpass their own fame. Adapted from Heinrich Mann's novel "Professor Unrath," this film deals with the breakdown of an authoritarian personality. Jannings plays the inhibited, tyrannical high-school instructor who is prudishly indignant about his students' visiting Lola Lola (Dietrich), the singer at the Blue Angel; he goes to the café to put a stop to it and instead succumbs to her callous, impassive sexuality. Dietrich's Lola Lola is a rather coarse, plump young beauty; as she sings "Falling in Love Again," her smoldering voice and sadistic indifference suggest sex without romance, love, or sentiment. The pedant becomes her husband, her slave, her stooge; he travels with the café troupe, hawking dirty pictures of his wife. Dietrich is extraordinary, and "The Blue Angel" is a movie you can admire sequence by sequence, because it's made in an imaginative, atmospheric style, yet you may feel that you don't really like it on an emotional level; the sexual humiliation gets very heavy in the scenes in which the teacher, now a clown, returns to his home town and to his old classroom. With Hans Albers. Songs by Friedrich Hollaender (later Frederick Hollander). A 1959 American remake directed by Edward Dmytryk starred Curt Jurgens and Mai Britt. In German. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 17.)

The Bostonians—Another of the film adaptations of great novels that fail to communicate what's great about the book—in this case, Henry James's liveliest novel, which is set in the period after the Civil War. It must certainly be the best novel in the language about the cold anger that the issue of equal rights for women can stir in a man, but you wouldn't know that from the movie, which was produced by Ismail Merchant and directed by James Ivory, from a script by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. Although it's not as limp as some of their other collaborations, they don't dramatize the material, and Ivory doesn't shape the performances. As Basil Ransom, who thinks women essentially inferior to men, Christopher Reeve has such a likable, wholesomely romantic presence that he takes the sting out of his lines. And as Verena, the sparkling, flirtatious young girl who has been trained by her mesmerist father to surrender her mind, Madeleine Potter is odd and overcontrolled. The only good reason to see the insignificant, washed-out film is Vanessa Redgrave's performance as the repressed lesbian Olive Chancellor, who grooms Verena to be a spokesperson for the suffragettes. With Jessica Tandy, Linda Hunt, Nancy Marchand, and Wesley Addy in the role of Verena's father. (Reviewed in our issue of 8/6/84.) (Cinema I.)

The Bounty—Based on a script condensed from Robert Bolt's scripts for two projected films about the 1789 mutiny, this misshappen movie doesn't work as an epic—it doesn't have the scope or the emotional surge of epic storytelling. It's certainly not boring, though. The director, Roger Donaldson, shoots very close in for dynamic power—you're thrust right in among the men on the crowded British naval vessel—and Anthony Hopkins, who plays Captain Bligh, gives his vocal cords a workout, ordering Fletcher Christian (Mel Gibson) to stop "mixing with the damned degenerate natives" and shouting that "the ship is filthy." In this version, Bligh is no worse than ambitious, repressed, and somewhat harsh, and Christian is an open-shirted man of impulse—a moody flower child who's drugged on love. Whether because of the condensing or cuts in the editing room or just plain miscalculation, Gibson's romanticism seems faintly absurd, and in his big scene—his emo-

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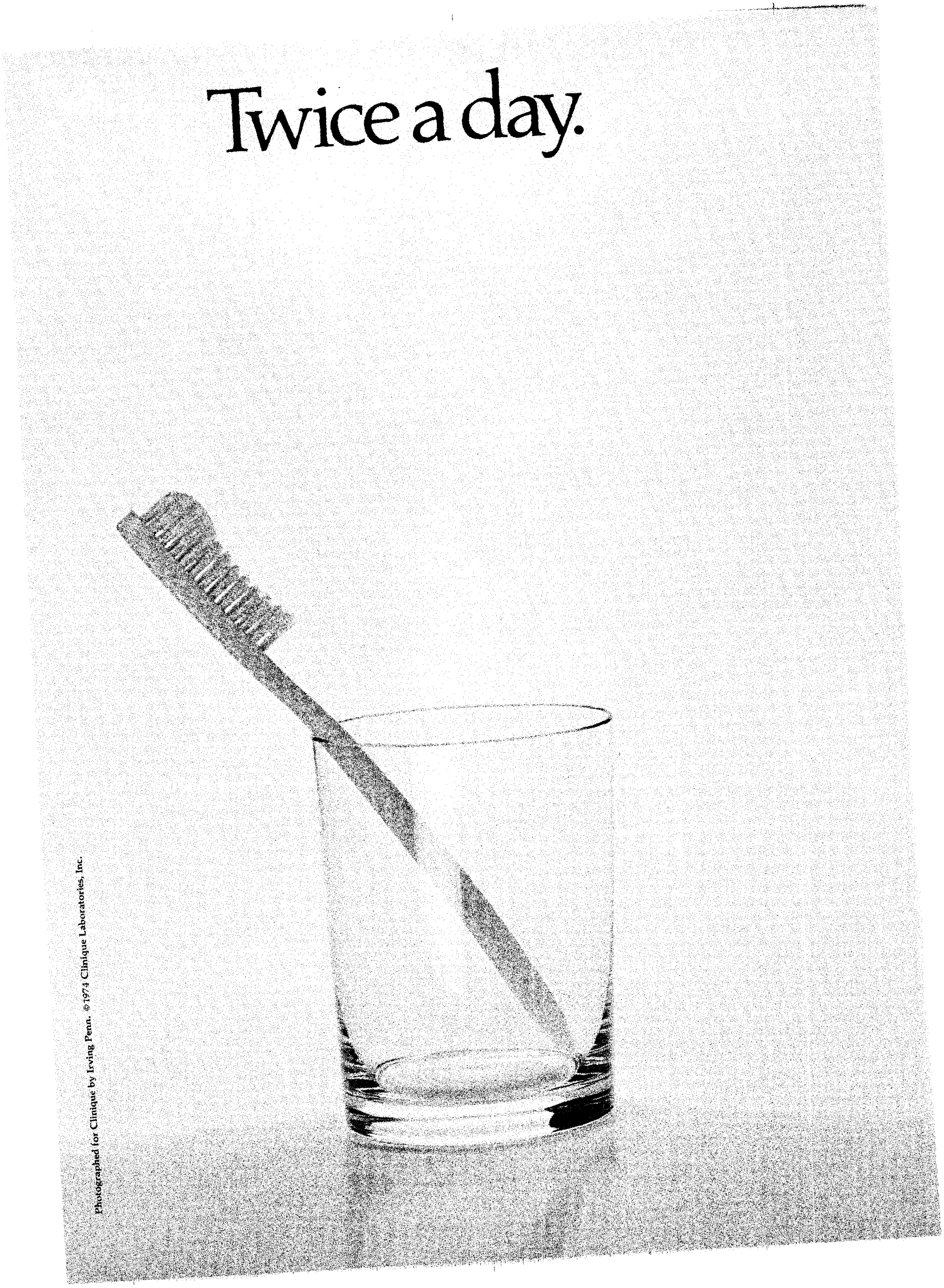

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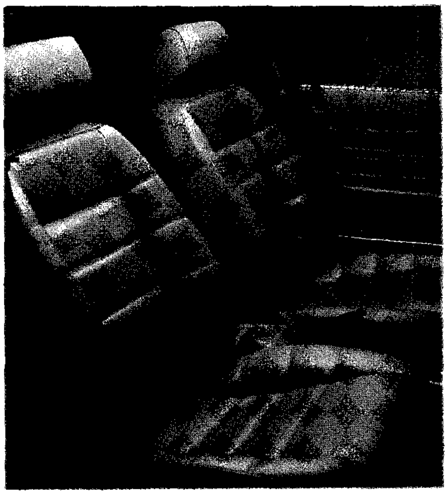

This is one good reason Peugeots are so comfortable. In the 505 Turbo, the deep contoured bucket seats are upholstered in velour. Leather is optional.

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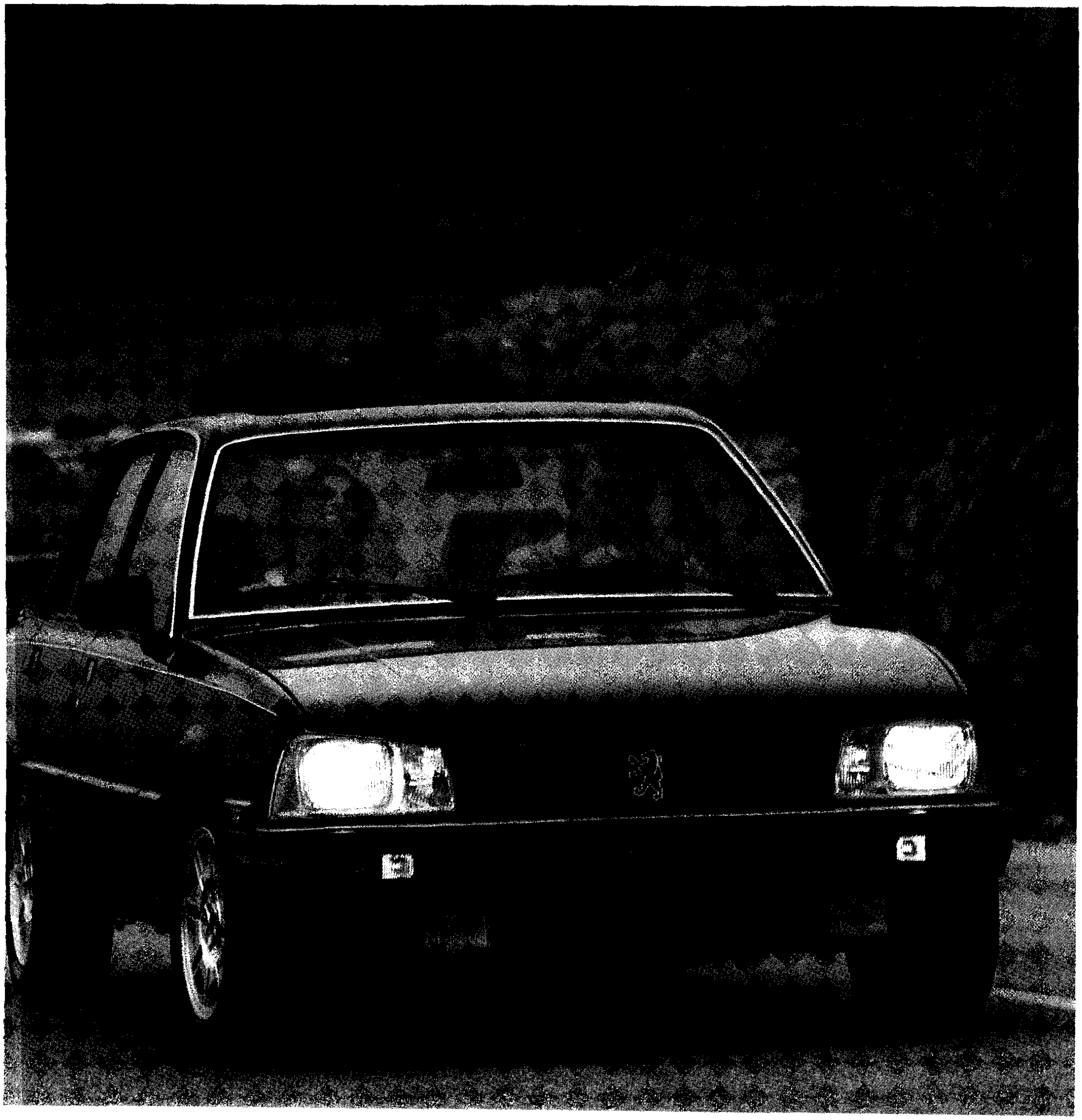

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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tional outburst during the mutiny—he seems to be having a nervous breakdown. With Wi Kuki Kaa as King Tynah, Tevaite Vernette as Princess Mauatua, skinny-faced Daniel Day-Lewis as Fryer, and, among the effete aristocrats who sit on the court-martial, Laurence Olivier and Edward Fox (who has this performance down pat by now—he lets his crooked front tooth do his acting for him). Adapted from Richard Hough's 1972 book "Captain Bligh and Mr. Christian;" the music is by Vangelis, who goes in for effects such as ominous boom-booms when Christian first touches Mauatua's hair. (6/11/84) (Olympia Quad; starting Sept. 14.)

Carnal Knowledge (1971)—Jules Feiffer, who wrote the screenplay, had what sounds like a promising idea: to take two college roommates in the mid-nineteen-forties and follow their sexual attitudes and activities through to their middle age in the early seventies. But Feiffer rigged the case and wrote a grimly purposeful tract on depersonalization and how we use each other sexually as objects, and, in the director Mike Nichols' cold, slick style, the movie is like a neon sign spelling out the soullessness of neon. Glowering Jack Nicholson (who becomes a tax lawyer) is a jock with a big-breast fixation, and we watch him over the years yelling at his mistress, Ann-Margret, and exploding in frustration as he becomes more and more impotent, until finally he's being lied to and serviced by a prostitute (Rita Moreno). Arthur Garfunkel (who becomes a doctor) is a mild drip who goes from a dull, proper marriage with Candice Bergen to an affair with a snooty bitch (Cynthia O'Neal) and winds up with a curly-haired, teen-age hippie (Carol Kane). It's a parallel history of dissatisfaction and emptiness, and as the men age the picture scores off them repeatedly and never lets them win a round. In the film's politicized morality, if well-heeled Americans have sex it must be vile, because how could they possibly know anything about love? As Mike Nichols has directed the material, the effects are almost all achieved through the line readings, and the cleverness is unpleasant—it's all surface and whacking emphasis. This surefire, hit-it-on-the-button comedy style has about the same relationship to humor that belting has to singing. (Hollywood Twin Cinema 2; Sept. 17-18.)

Coup de Torchon (1981; "Clean Slate")—Bertrand Tavernier's film is set in some sort of French colonial Dogpatch in Africa, in 1938, just before the start of the Second World War, and it stars Philippe Noiret as a cuckolded weakling who is jeered at by the pimps and the other brutal white men who exploit the natives. He is also the only officer of the law in the area, and he secretly kills off the exploiters, using his reputation for being cowardly and ineffectual as a cover. The movie is torpid even in the early sequences that aim at sly farce, and its thesis is that even such drastic and half-mad cleanup jobs are hopeless. For a while it's a "Dirty Harry" revenge fantasy for liberals; then the officer lets us know that he thinks he is Christ returned and the picture shifts into Christ mythology. Tavernier may think he's bringing out the rage behind despair, but all he brings out is his sense of futility. He's saying horrible, senseless, inexplicable things (such as the whopper that killing on a small scale is less immoral than killing on a big scale). The film chokes on its own unresolvable ambiguities. With Isabelle Huppert, who frisks about nakedly and amusingly, and Jean-Pierre Marielle, Stéphane Audran, Guy Marchand, Eddy Mitchell as Nono, Samba Mane as Friday, Abdoulaye Diop as Fête Nat, and Irene Skobline as the schoolteacher. The script, by Jean Aurenche and Tavernier, is based on the American pulp novel "Pop. 1280," by Jim Thompson, which was set in the American South. In French. (Metro Cinema; Sept. 20.)

Danton (1983)—Andrzej Wajda's film comes from a Polish play of the nineteen-twenties that depicts Danton as a kind of proto-revisionist and makes Robespierre the real hero of their encounter, which resulted in Danton's going to the guillotine. Wajda and his screenwriter, Jean-Claude Carrière, stood the play on its head, making heroic Robespierre (Wojciech Pszoniak) into a sociopath who soaks his bed with sweat and cringes if a woman touches him, and Danton (Gérard Depardieu) into a slob and a libertine and a lush who in the end would rather be executed than executioner, and defies the Terror he helped to theorize. In France, where the movie was partially financed by the Socialist government, right and left divided over whether Wajda had a correct appreciation of the French Revolution, not over whether it was a good film or a bad one. By any reasonable standard, "Danton" is terrible. In French. (2/28/83; under Letter from Europe.) (Olympia Quad; Sept. 14-20.)

Entre Nous—The French actress-turned-filmmaker Diane Kurys tells the story of two young married women (Isabelle Huppert and Miou-Miou) who don't recognize how unfulfilled they have been in their marriages until they meet each other. The women are romanticized and politicized as soul mates; they're turned into feminist precursors, while the husbands (Guy Marchand and Jean-Pierre Bacri), who always seem to need a shave, are treated as lumps. Kurys tells us that the characters played by Huppert and Marchand are her parents, and Marchand, who plays his role superbly, is the only one a viewer is likely to have any feeling for. But Kurys has made a very peculiar kind of memory film: its psychology goes in one direction; its sexual politics take it in another. The picture keeps teetering on the verge of a seduction scene, and that teasing possibility gives many of the scenes their only tension. This is a movie about two women not having a lesbian affair. The only thing that's distinctive about it is its veneer of post-feminism. In French. (3/5/84) (Cinema Studio.)

Eréndira—A moderately amusing nothing in the surreal-picaresque mode, it was written by Gabriel García Márquez but seems more like the work of someone faking Gabriel García Márquez. The Brazilian director Ruy Guerra puts the García Márquez touches in place, but they have no hallucinatory tingle. A mad old witch (Irene Papas) forces her virginal fourteen-year-old granddaughter Eréndira (Claudia Ohana) to work for her as a whore. And before long the witch is festooned in gold ingots. Little Claudia Ohana is lovely, and very convincing as a budding young girl. And Papas is marvellous; she isn't fake anything—she's an original. Roaring with laughter and giggling on top of it, she survives one attempt on her life after another. Papas's merriment is gargantuan; she could play a female Falstaff. With Michel Lonsdale, Rufus, Pierre Vaneck, and Oliver Wehe as the duped angel. In Spanish. (6/11/84) (Quad Cinema; through Sept. 20.)

First Name: Carmen—Directed by Jean-Luc Godard. In French. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Footloose—High-school kids in a mythical Midwestern community that bans rock 'n' roll and dancing—a piece of neo-Andy Hardyism, with plot elements from "Rebel Without a Cause" and dance numbers chopped to pieces in the rock-video manner of "Flashdance." (Footloose is what they're not.) The director, Herbert Ross, and the writer, Dean Pitchford, exhaust one bad idea after another, and build up to a letdown: you don't get the climactic dance you expect. This will probably be the only rock musical ever made in which every single character is white Protestant. With Kevin Bacon as the new boy in town who challenges the bans and fights for the right of the students to have a senior prom; John Lithgow as the glum Reverend (of the town's only church); Lori Singer as the Reverend's spitfire daughter; Christopher Penn as a sluggish hayseed; and Jim Youngs, Sarah Jessica Parker, and Dianne Wiest. There's an exhilarating title sequence, a good brief scene with a little boy asleep in church, and an entertaining passage in which Bacon teaches Penn to dance. And despite the retrograde material, Lori Singer has a startling radiance, and Penn manages to be funny and appealing. Edited by Paul Hirsch. (3/5/84) (Embassy 1; through Sept. 13.)

The 4th Man—The Dutch director Paul Verhoeven and his usual scenarist, Gerard Soeteman, are out to give us a shockingly good time in this thriller about a homosexual writer (Jeroen Krabbé) who allows himself to be pampered by a rich blond widow (Renée Soutendijk), because he has a passionate yen for her longtime lover. The film's comic tone depends on our being tickled by the writer's arrogance and mean-spiritedness. What keeps the movie from being any more than a tongue-in-cheek homoerotic fantasy is that the widow, who needs to be a teasingly ambiguous figure—so that we can't tell if the writer is deluding himself that she's a killer who has already dispatched three husbands, or if his hyperactive imagination is alerting him to the truth—is disappointingly placid, a blank. But the film is amusing, and the talented Jeroen Krabbé plays worminess exuberantly. Adapted from a novel by the Netherlands writer Gerard Reve, who lends the writer-protagonist his own name. In Dutch. (7/9/84) (Waverly.)

Gallipoli (1981)—A well-executed academic exercise about the waste of war—two young Australian runners, played by (dark-haired) Mel Gibson and (blond) Mark Lee, are slaughtered. (They and other Australians are sacrificed in an ill-conceived First World War maneuver designed to protect the British.) It's an "artistic" film, full of familiar pathos and irony—a tragic buddy-buddy movie directed by Peter Weir. His wide-screen staging is very elegant; his weakness is in his habit of stereotyping villains (in this case they're mostly the British). There's also a larger weakness: there's no discernible reason for him to have made the picture except to bring off a "classic." Gibson gives a fresh and impressive performance, but Lee does a very conventional acting job and his character is much too gallant and good and brave. With Bill Kerr, a fine, bald-headed actor with a great voice, as Uncle Jack, who reads aloud to the children. The script is by David Williamson; the cinematography is by Russell Boyd. (Thalia; Sept. 22.)

Ghostbusters—Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, and Harold Ramis as parapsychologists who try to save New York City from an influx of spooks. Murray is the film's comic mechanism: the more supernatural the situation, the more jaded his reaction. But nobody else has much in the way of material, and since

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there's almost no give-and-take among the three men, Murray's lines fall on dead air. Playing opposite Murray, Sigourney Weaver is a living zinger; when she stands talking to Murray, she's eye to eye with him and she looks vivid and indestructible. The cast includes Annie Potts, who uses her wonderful self-enclosed quality, and Rick Moranis, Ernie Hudson, William Atherton, and David Margulies. The script is by Aykroyd and Ramis; the cinematography is by Laszlo Kovacs. Produced and directed by Ivan Reitman. (6/25/84) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Waverly, Loews 83rd Quad, and Loews State.)

The Glenn Miller Story (1954)—Blandly dull big bio, with James Stewart as a pedantic Glenn Miller trying to discover "his own sound;" it's like a Hollywood version of the life of an inventor. June Allyson plays the all-American square Miller marries; right after the ceremony, she is taken up to Harlem, where Gene Krupa and Louis Armstrong get into a jam session (they do "Basin Street Blues"), and it's typical of the family-films format that we're expected to identify with her getting tired and sleepy. Most of the music in this film does have a soporific quality. Miller's famous numbers, such as "Tuxedo Junction" and "Little Brown Jug," have been re-created (Joe Yukl dubs Stewart on the trombone), and they don't quite swing. The director, Anthony Mann, seems out of his element. With Henry Morgan, Sig Rumann, George Tobias, Charles Drake, Carleton Young, Frances Langford (as a blonde), and the Modernaires, the Archie Savage Dancers, and the Mello-Men. The script is by Valentine Davies and Oscar Brodney. (Hollywood Twin Cinema 1; Sept. 18-19.)

Gremlins—The director Joe Dante has the sensibility of a freaked-out greeting-card poet. This whimsical pop shocker is set in a sleepy small town at Christmastime. The hero, Billy (Zach Galligan), a young bank teller, is given a mogwai—a tiny creature who nests in a box and makes gentle cooing sounds; when the instructions that Billy is given for its care are inadvertently disobeyed, the mogwai multiplies, and its progeny turn into greedy, demonic little gargoyles. The picture is a black humorist's parody of Steven Spielberg's "E.T." Billy's mogwai is a good child; the other mogwai are its aggressively vulgar, beer-guzzling brothers—children of the night. With Frances Lee McCain as Billy's mother, Polly Holliday as the town's Wicked Witch-Scrooge, Dick Miller as the town drunk, and Phoebe Cates, Hoyt Axton, Keye Luke, Glynn Turman, Judge Reinhold, Edward Andrews, and Chuck Jones as Mr. Jones. Written by Chris Columbus; the critters were designed by Chris Walas. (6/25/84) (R.K.O. Century Warner Twin. . . . ¶ St. Marks Cinema, and Olympia Quad; through Sept. 13.)

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom—This film directed by Steven Spielberg stands in relation to the previous Indiana Jones picture, "Raiders of the Lost Ark," as "The Godfather, Part II" stands to "The Godfather." Spielberg creates an atmosphere of happy disbelief: the more breathtaking and exhilarating the stunts are, the funnier they are. Nobody has ever fused thrills and laughter in quite the way that he does here. Spielberg starts off at full charge in the opening sequence and just keeps going. There isn't a letdown anywhere in it. Harrison Ford is the adventurer-archeologist hero, Ke Huy Quan plays his child sidekick, Short Round, and Kate Capshaw is the gold-digger heroine. The plot involves them with an odious boy maharajah and Mola Ram (an anagram for Malomar), the high priest of a cult of Kali worshippers—they come right out of the 1939 adventure comedy "Gunga Din." It's one of the most sheerly pleasurable physical comedies ever made. A Lucasfilm Production, from a story idea by George Lucas, and a script by Willard Huyck and Gloria Katz. The score, by John Williams, is too heavy for the tone of the film, and it's too loud. (6/11/84) (Loews New York Twin, and Loews Astor Plaza.)

Lawrence of Arabia (1962)—If you went to see it under the delusion that it was going to be about T. E. Lawrence, you probably stayed to enjoy the vastness of the desert and the pleasures of the senses that a huge movie epic can provide. Directed by David Lean, from a script by Robert Bolt, loosely based on Lawrence's "Seven Pillars of Wisdom," this picture fails to give an acceptable interpretation of Lawrence, or to keep its action intelligible, but it is one of the most literate and tasteful and exciting of expensive spectacles. The central figure is played quite stunningly by Peter O'Toole, though he seems to be doing Lord Jim—which he was cast in a couple of years later (and then it looked as if he were doing Lawrence all over again). Bolt and Lean turn the hero into such a flamboyant poetic enigma that he is displaced in the film by a simpler hero—Omar Sharif's Ali, a handsome sheik with liquid brown eyes and conventionally sympathetic lines to speak. Ali, an old-fashioned movie hero, was more at home in what, despite the literacy, was a big action movie. And as it became apparent that most people in the audience hadn't the remotest idea of what the Arabs and the Turks were doing in the First World War, or which was which, or why the English cared, the question raised by the movie was: Can complicated historical events and a complex hero really get across in a spectacle? Fortunately for this particular spectacle, audiences seemed to be satisfied with the explanation that the Turks were more cruel than the Arabs, and although the movie's Lawrence became cruel, too, there was warmhearted Ali to take over. (When Bolt and Lean cast Sharif as their poetic enigma in their next film, "Dr. Zhivago," they forgot to provide a simpler fellow as a standby.) With Alec Guinness, José Ferrer, Anthony Quinn, Arthur Kennedy, Jack Hawkins, Claude Rains, Anthony Quayle, and Donald Wolfit. Cinematography by Freddie Young; music by Maurice Jarre. (221 minutes.) (Ziegfeld; starting Sept. 14.)

Man Hunt (1941)—Fritz Lang directed the Dudley Nichols adaptation of Geoffrey Household's "Rogue Male"—an anti-Nazi thriller about a broad-shouldered British big-game hunter (Walter Pidgeon) stalking Hitler at Berchtesgaden. It's ingenious, all right, but the direction is too insistent and the plot too tangled for a first-rate entertainment. Joan Bennett plays the streetwalker heroine, whom the studio turned into a "seamstress" to get past the Hays office. With George Sanders, John Carradine, Roddy McDowall, and Ludwig Stossel. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 18.)

Mannequin (1938)—A star vehicle in which the star—Joan Crawford—is a lyric talker and so solemnly noble that you want to strangle her. Poetic flights are her specialty as she rises from Hester Street to penthouses, suffering from emotional conflicts every step of the way. Alan Curtis, a corner loafer with a mean slant to his fedora, is the bad egg whom she marries and stays loyal to, even after she meets Spencer Tracy, a self-made shipping tycoon, who has been looking all his life for her kind of nobility. As the picture drags along from one crisis to another, the self-righteousness in Crawford's voice seems to get throatier and more grating. The director, Frank Borzage, gives some care to the tenement sequences, but he's perfunctory when the locales become swanky. The unconvincing script (from a Katherine Brush story) is no more than an excuse for M-G-M gloss and glamour; a simple statement of the truth would solve the heroine's wracking problems. With Mary Philips as the heroine's no-nonsense friend, and Leo Gorcey, Ralph Morgan, and Elisabeth Risdon. (Regency; Sept. 16-17.)

Metropolis (1926)—H. G. Wells called this German silent movie, directed by Fritz Lang, "quite the silliest film;" Hitler was so impressed by the conception that many years later he tried (unsuccessfully) to persuade Lang to make Nazi movies. Lang's prophetic city of the twenty-first century (suggested by his first view of New York) has two levels: one for the rich and pleasure-loving, the other—labyrinthine, underground—for the slave workers who tend the machines. The industrialist tyrant who runs Metropolis plots to incite riots so that he can crush the workers' rebelliousness. His son has gone down to the workers and fallen in love with the saintly firebrand Maria (Brigitte Helm). The tyrant plots with an inventor, Rotwang (a mad medieval type like Dr. Caligari and, with his mechanical arm, father to Dr. Strangelove), who, in a phenomenal science-fiction laboratory sequence, creates a steel double for

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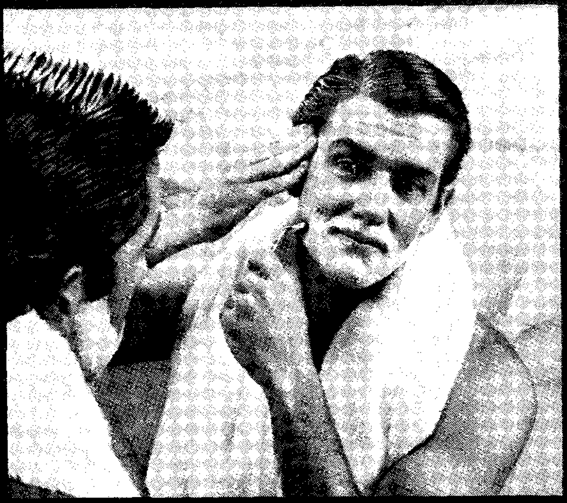

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Maria—the false Maria, who leads the masses to revolt. But the destruction gets out of hand, the children of the workers are about to be caught in a flood, and all of Metropolis would be destroyed were it not for the final alliance of the industrialist, his son, the true Maria, and the workers. One of the last examples of the imaginative—but often monstrous—grandeur of the Golden Period of German film, "Metropolis" is a spectacular instance of Expressionist design (grouped human beings are used architecturally), with moments of almost incredible beauty and power (the visionary sequence about the Tower of Babel), absurd ineptitudes (the lovesick hero in his preposterous knickerbockers), and oddities that defy analysis (the robot vamp's bizarre, lewd wink). It's a wonderful, stupefying folly. With Alfred Abel as the industrialist, Gustav Frölich as his son, Rudolf Klein-Rogge, Fritz Rasp, and Heinrich George. Script by Thea von Harbou (who did go to work for the Nazis); cinematography by Karl Freund and Günther Rittau, with Eugen Schüfftan shooting the special effects. Note: The version showing now was reconstructed by Giorgio Moroder, with tinting that attempts to follow Lang's original specifications, and with a modern pop score—it includes contributions by Loverboy, Pat Benatar, Adam Ant, Billy Squier, and Bonnie Tyler. (57th St. Playhouse.)

Midnight Express (1978)—Puts the squeeze on us right from the start. It's single-minded in its manipulation of the audience: this is a clear-cut case of film technique split off from any artistic impulse. The film is based on the story of Billy Hayes, a vacationing American college student who was caught smuggling two kilos of hashish out of Turkey and imprisoned. But its juiciest episodes are inventions; the screenwriter, Oliver Stone, and the director, Alan Parker, have subjected their Billy (Brad Davis) to the most photogenic sadomasochistic brutalization that they could dream up. The film is like a porno fantasy about the sacrifice of a virgin. It rushes from torment to torment, treating Billy's ordeals hypnotically in soft colors—muted squalor—with a disco beat in the background. The prison itself is more like a brothel than a prison. All of this is packaged as social protest. With John Hurt as Max, Randy Quaid as Jimmy, Bo Hopkins as Tex, Paolo Bonacelli as Rifki, Mike Kellin as Billy's father, and Paul Smith as the Turkish head guard, Hamidou, who looks like a Picasso bull. Music by Giorgio Moroder; shot in Malta. (Hollywood Twin Cinema 2; Sept. 21-22.)

Miss Sadie Thompson (1953)—Somerset Maugham's story "Miss Thompson" was adapted to the stage as "Rain" and opened in 1922, starring Jeanne Eagels. The first movie version came out in 1928, starring Gloria Swanson as the sinner-heroine, and another in 1932, with Joan Crawford. Sadie Thompson was the prototype of many of the shady ladies in exotic locales played by Jean Harlow, Marlene Dietrich, Hedy Lamarr, Mae West, Ann Sheridan, Ava Gardner, and dozens of others. But by the fifties Maugham's durable vehicle, in which the conflict is between Sadie the honest whore and the wrathful, hypocritical Reverend Davidson, had run into Production Code censorship troubles, so in this updated-to-the-Second World War version Sadie (Rita Hayworth) just seems a naturally high-spirited girl who likes to sing and dance and scamper about with small children. She's wandering from one island to another because she's looking for a night-club engagement, and Davidson (José Ferrer) isn't even allowed to be a clergyman. He appears to be an insomniac spoilsport who wants her to stop entertaining the troops so he can get a night's sleep in the South Pacific hostel that shelters him, Sadie, a batch of Marines, and the sergeant (Aldo Ray) who falls in love with her. Rita Hayworth seems physically overblown, and attempting to be sincere, she's rather dull (though she works hard to be scorching when she sings). Curtis Bernhardt directed this color version, which includes several musical numbers; in its initial showing in New York it was in 3-D, but that was dropped for the national release. It is here being shown in the original 3-D version. (Hollywood Twin Cinema 2; Sept. 16.)

Paisan (1946)—Roberto Rossellini made this episodic film after his breakthrough with "Open City" the year before. Each of the six parts has a story and deals with an aspect of the war that had just ended. The present-tense semi-documentary visual style is innovative, the content less so. Some of the stories have a tidy O. Henry finish, and there's a lot of sentimentality, though the film gives the impression of being loose and open. The script, by Federico Fellini and Rossellini, was based on stories they and others had written. (The Florence episode is by Vasco Pratolini, who isn't credited.) With Maria Michi and Gar Moore in the Roman episode, and Dots M. Johnson as the black soldier in Naples. Cinematography by Otello Martelli. In English, French, Italian, and German. (Thalia; Sept. 19.)

Purple Rain—In this fictional bio, Prince, the twenty-six-year-old pansexual rock star, appears as the Kid, a vulnerable loner and struggling musician. It's not difficult to see the attraction that the picture has for adolescents: Prince's songs are a cry for the free expression of sexual energy, and his suffering is a supercharged version of what made James Dean the idol of young moviegoers—this Kid is "hurting." And this picture knows no restraint. It was directed by Albert Magnoli (who also wrote the final script and was the co-editor), but Prince is in charge, and he knows how he wants to appear—like Dionysus crossed with a convent girl on her first bender. It's pretty terrible (there are no real scenes—just flashy, fractured rock-video moments), but those willing to accept Prince as a sexual messiah aren't likely to mind. The film introduces a full-fledged young comedian, Morris Day, the lead singer of The Time, who suggests a Richard Pryor without the genius and the complications. With Patty Apollonia Kotero, Jerome Benton, and Clarence Williams III as the Kid's father. Cinematography by Donald Thorin; shot in Minneapolis. (8/20/84) (R.K.O. Century Art, Loews 83rd Quad, and Criterion Theatres. . . . ¶ Sutton; Sept. 12. . . . ¶ R.K.O. Century 86th St. Twin; through Sept. 20. . . . ¶ Manhattan; starting Sept. 13. . . . ¶ Olympia Quad; starting Sept. 14.)

Repo Man—The L.A. of freeways and off ramps and squarish, pastel-colored buildings is the perfect setting for a movie about men who take out their frustrations by repossessing other people's cars. The film takes off from Godard's "Weekend," with (probably) some help from Aldrich's "Kiss Me Deadly" and Zemeckis and Gale's "Used Cars," but its catatonic, shoo-fly humor is all its own. The young English writer-director Alex Cox keeps his dazed sociopaths speeding around—always on the periphery. There's nothing at the center. But the whole comic atmosphere of druggy burnout gets to you, and Cox never once slips—he never lets things get sentimentalized or organized. With Harry Dean Stanton, Emilio Estevez, Tracey Walter, Vonetta McGee, and Fox Harris. Robby Müller's cinematography sustains the flat grunginess of the conception; so does a song by the L.A. group The Circle Jerks. (8/6/84) (8th St. Playhouse.)

Scarface (1932)—The gangster classic, with Paul Muni as the dangerous hood with the scar on his cheek, and dark, huge-eyed Ann Dvorak as his sister. The writer, Ben Hecht, and the director, Howard Hawks, said that they wrote the story by treating the Capone family "as if they were the Borgias set down in Chicago." Over all, it's a terrific movie, even though the pacing doesn't always seem quite right. The opening sequence is a beauty: the camera moves from a street lamp with stylized skyscrapers in the background and follows a milkman into a speakeasy, where we see the remnants of a gangland New Year's Eve party and finally pick up the shadow of Scarface, who kills the gangland leader. The film's violence has the crazy, helter-skelter feeling of actual gun battles, and Paul Muni, with a machine gun in his arms, is brutal and grotesque, in a primal, childlike, fixating way. Truffaut suggests that Hawks "deliberately directed Paul Muni to make him look like a monkey, his arms hanging loosely and slightly curved, his face caught in a perpetual grimace." The cast includes George Raft, Osgood Perkins, Karen Morley, Boris Karloff, Vince Barnett, Edwin Maxwell, C. Henry Gordon, Tully Marshall, Henry Armetta, and Purnell Pratt. Here's Truffaut again: "The most striking scene in the movie is unquestionably

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Boris Karloff's death. He squats down to throw a ball in a game of ninepins and doesn't get up; a rifle shot prostrates him. The camera follows the ball he's thrown as it knocks down all the pins except one that keeps spinning until it finally falls over, the exact symbol of Karloff himself, the last survivor of a rival gang that's been wiped out by Muni. This isn't literature. It may be dance or poetry. It is certainly cinema." The story, based on a novel by Armitage Trail, is credited to Hecht, and the continuity and dialogue to Seton I. Miller, John Lee Mahin, and W. R. Burnett. The cinematography is by Lee Garmes and L. W. O'Connell. The film was ready for release in 1930, but was held up for two years by censorship problems; the scene in the publisher's office wasn't directed by Hawks—it was inserted to appease pressure groups. The title "Scarface" bore the subtitle "Shame of the Nation." (Little Theatre, Public Theatre.)

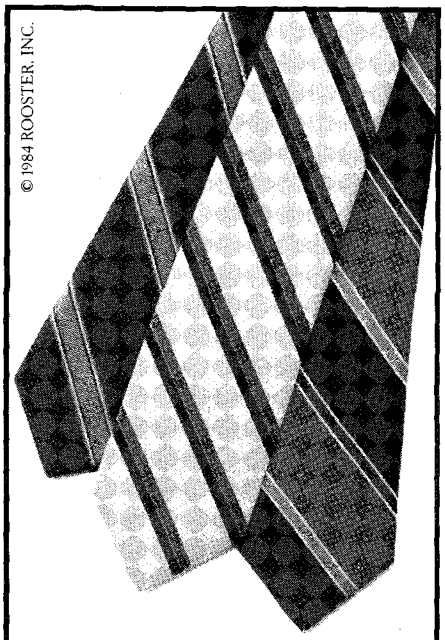
SHEENA—With Tanya Roberts, directed by John Guillerman. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Embassy; through Sept. 13.)

SLEUTH (1972)—At first, the elation of seeing Laurence Olivier in a big role is sufficient to give this Joseph L. Mankiewicz transcription of the Anthony Shaffer play (about an eccentric author of detective novels and his prey—Michael Caine) a high spirit, and Olivier seems to be having a ripsnorting old time. But the cleverness of Shaffer's excessive literacy wears down, and the stupid tricks that the two characters play on each other keep grinding on. It's Olivier in the kind of material he outgrew more than thirty years ago—it's Olivier in a George Sanders role. Cinematography by Oswald Morris. (Regency; Sept. 20-22.)

STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK—With Leonard Nimoy at the helm, this is the first movie directed by a Vulcan; maybe we shouldn't be surprised that it's achingly prosaic. Its predecessor, "Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan," ended with Spock's casket's being sent to a newly created planet, the paradisiacal Genesis, where, the audience could assume, he would be reborn. Admiral Kirk (William Shatner) and his venerable crew must steal the now mothballed Enterprise to rescue Spock—whatever form he's in—and take him home to Vulcan. The principal diversion comes from the Klingons, a bunch of ogres whose brains appear to be on the outside of their foreheads, and their Lord (Christopher Lloyd), who manages to be droll despite the absolute nonexistence of comedy scenes in this movie. There's also a ceremony conducted by a Vulcan priestess, played by Judith Anderson (in her eighty-seventh year); her voice is so commandingly intense it's scary, and she brings a spot of high style to this movie—her huge, pointy ears only add to her grandeur. From a script by the producer, Harve Bennett. (7/9/84) (Guild; through Sept. 13.)

THREE COMRADES (1938)—Scott Fitzgerald worked on many films, but this is one of the rare ones that actually retain his spirit. ("Winter Carnival" is another.) Bits of the dialogue are elegantly romantic, and the atmosphere has his distinctive chivalrous quality. Margaret Sullavan, slender and special, and with her ravishing huskiness, is an ideal Fitzgerald heroine—a perfect Daisy—and she brings her elusive, gallant sexiness to this First World War romance, taken from a Remarque novel. It's conventional and heavy and false in the M-G-M manner, but with this delicate Fitzgerald feeling rising out of it at times. The movie is still awful; it has a particularly offensive tearjerking score by Franz Waxman. Produced by Joseph L. Mankiewicz. (Fitzgerald's letter imploring him not to change the dialogue has been published.) The script is credited to Fitzgerald and Edward A. Paramore. Directed by Frank Borzage. With Robert Taylor, Franchot Tone (who is tight-faced here—he's probably conscious of how terrible he is), Robert Young, Monty Woolley, Lionel Atwill, Guy Kibbee, Charley Grapewin, and Henry Hull. (Regency; Sept. 16-17.)

TWO FOR THE ROAD (1967)—The scriptwriter, Frederic Raphael, set his brittle stamp on this story of a husband and wife—Albert



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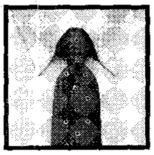

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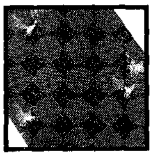

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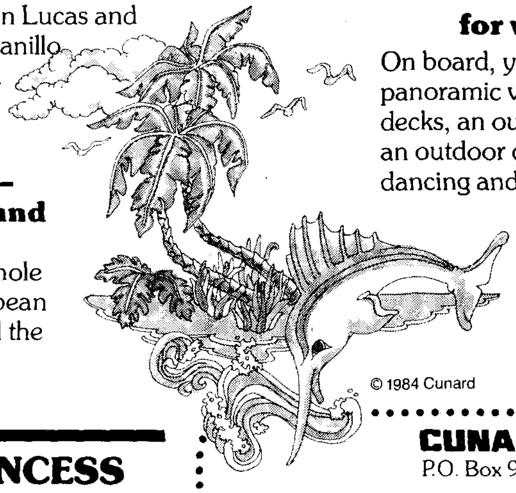

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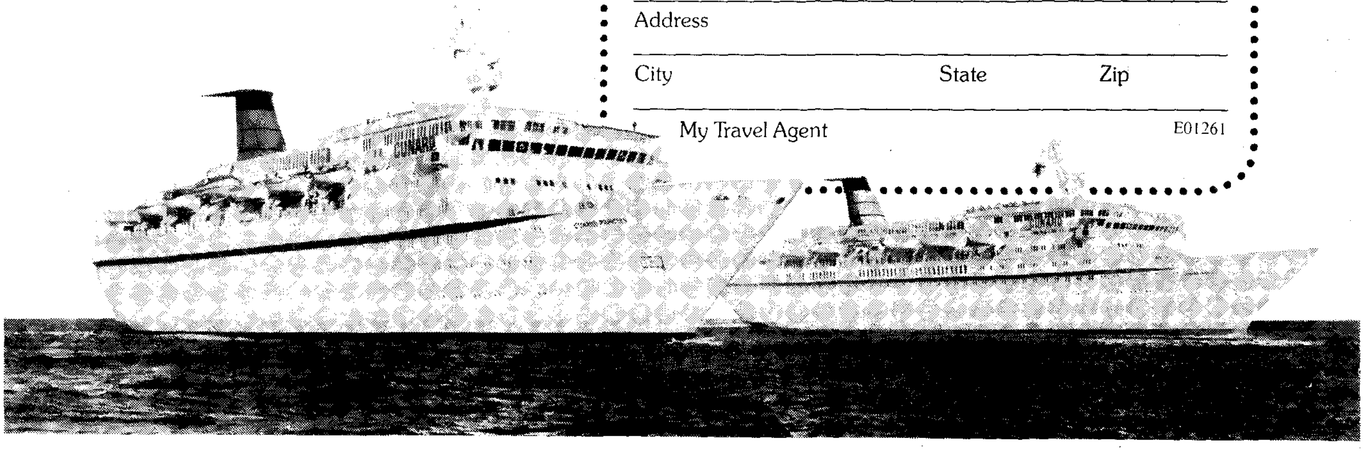

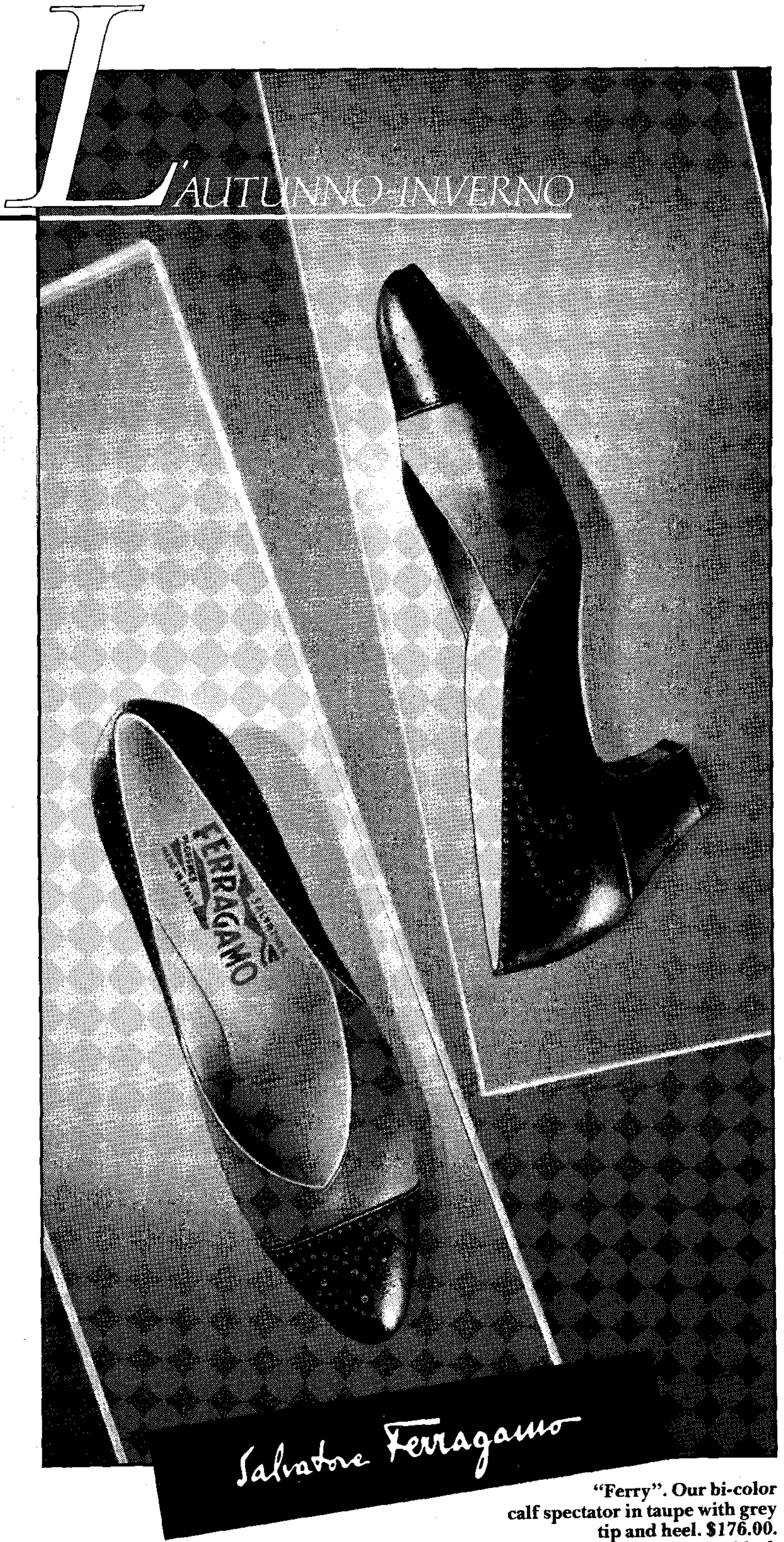

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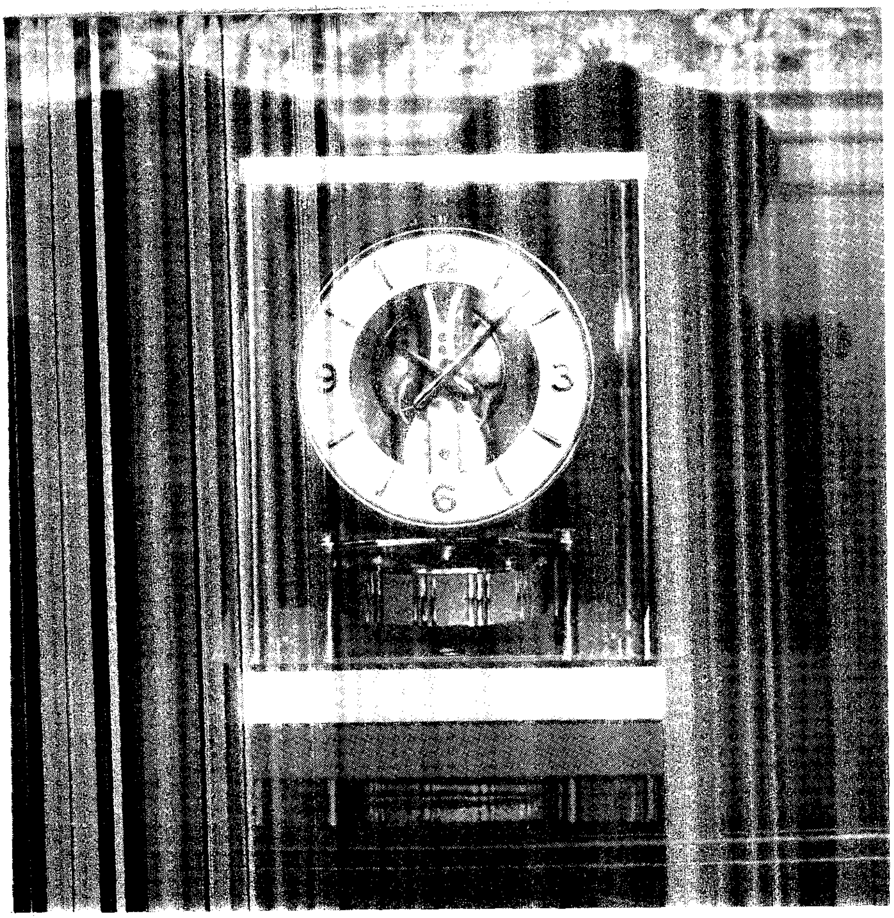
Finney and Audrey Hepburn—seen on European trips at different periods of their lives, not consecutively but shifting back and forth. Other films by the director, Stanley Donen, are not conspicuously edgy or self-conscious. (And when Donen fails it's usually in less complicated ways.) The intention is to show a modern marriage in which ideal people, in love and successful, are still not happy. But the film's veneer is that of slick commercial comedy: there's always a swimming pool for the characters to take their pratfalls into. Raphael is witty and talented, but he is too much in love with old-movie comedy romances: he puts in tedious running jokes, such as the wife's always turning up with the passport the husband loses. And at the same time Raphael is trying for a bitter comment on modern marital ennui, of the "La Notte" variety. So the facile, comic bits set off audience expectations that are then betrayed, and the clever, bitter stuff just seems sour. Still, at times Hepburn is surpassingly beautiful—particularly at the end, when she's meant to be roughly the age she actually is, and her hard, lacquered mini-face is set off by a shining-disc gown. As the husband, Finney seems surly and beefy and rather infantile—which makes Hepburn look all the more gallant and poignant when the wife tries to make the best of things. Donen fumbled some sequences that *might* have worked: the comedy is often too broad, and the caricatures of Americans, played by William Daniel and Eleanor Bron, which would be embarrassingly overdone at fifty yards, are in closeup. Raphael's scheme is defective, anyway: his lovers seem shallow and empty not because of the spiritual malaise he's trying to show us but because he took them out of old movies and failed to give them enough character. With Jacqueline Bisset, Claude Dauphin, and Nadia Grey. Cinematography by Christopher Challis. (Metro Cinema; Sept. 18.)

The Year of Living Dangerously (1983)—Peter Weir's romantic adventure film is set in Indonesia in 1965, during the political upheavals that shook President Sukarno's unstable government, and centers on the Caucasian community of journalists and diplomats in Jakarta. Linda Hunt has the pivotal male role of the goblinlike Billy Kwan, a half-Chinese, half-Australian cameraman who plays matchmaker and brings together Mel Gibson, as a newly arrived Australian foreign correspondent, and Sigourney Weaver, as the assistant military attaché at the British Embassy. To a degree, Weir is the victim of his own skill at creating the illusion of authentic Third World misery, rioting, and chaos; the emaciation of the natives overwhelms the made-up problems of the Caucasians. But movie squalor has its own glamour, and scene by scene this film is fascinating; despite a certain amount of mystical-East blather, it's alive on the screen. A new-style old-time "dangerous" steaminess builds up as Gibson and Weaver eye each other. And though Billy Kwan is the movie's walking conscience and higher moral purpose, Linda Hunt's lyric intensity and concentration help to purify the lines she speaks. Filmed in the Philippines and Australia. With Bill Kerr, Michael Murphy, Bembol Roco, and Noel Ferrier. Based on C. J. Koch's highly readable 1978 novel. (2/21/83) (St. Marks Cinema; Sept. 14-20.)

Ziegfeld Girl (1941)—An odd, rather fascinating M-G-M musical that mixes melodrama with big production numbers. The story involves Judy Garland, James Stewart, Hedy Lamarr, and Dan Dailey, as a sadistic prizefighter who gives Lana Turner a bad time. (Dailey is scarily good.) The cast includes the great dancers Antonio and Rosario, who were known at the time as the Kids from Seville, and Tony Martin, Al Shean, Charles Winninger, Ian Hunter, Jackie Cooper, Eve Arden, and Edward Everett Horton. Directed by Robert Z. Leonard; the dance numbers were staged by Busby Berkeley, the costumes are by Adrian; the script is by Sonya Levien and Marguerite Roberts, from a story by W. A. McGuire; the songs, from various sources, include "You Stepped Out of a Dream," "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows," and "You." (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 20.)



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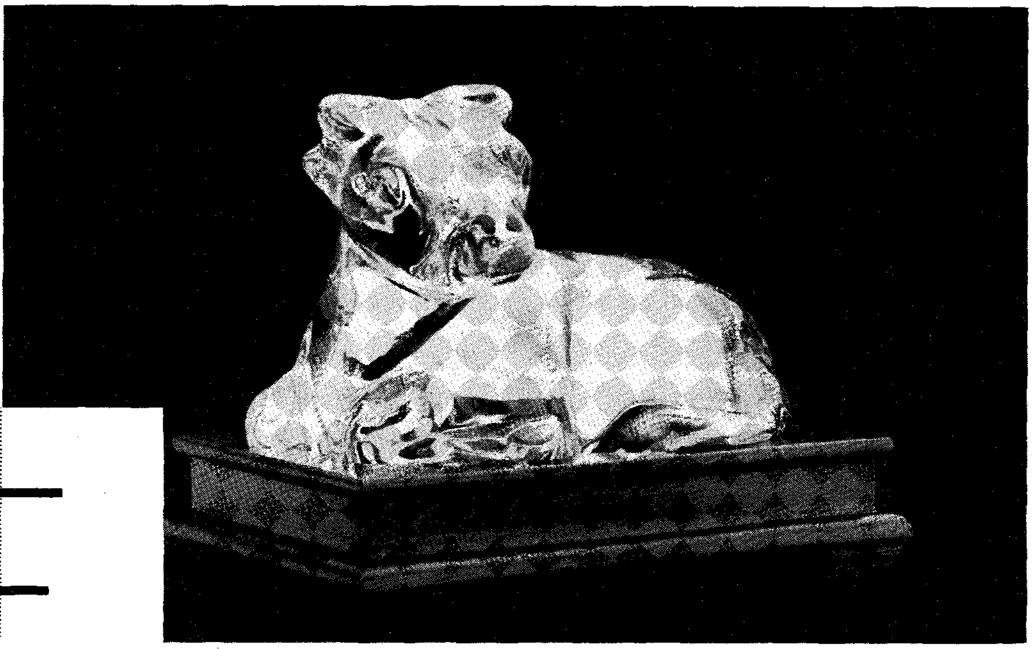

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

A WOMAN we know writes:

Even though I'm an ordinary citizen, I just got a letter from Senator Jake Garn, and others, asking me to join the Peace Through Strength U.S. Congressional Advisory Board. If I join, the lawmakers and I would come together personally at meetings in Washington to talk over the situation and the strategy against those who want to "force us to give up our vital role as the defenders of the free world." I'd be wearing my special Advisory Board I.D. I'd establish one-on-one relationships with members of Congress and other leaders. I'd be part of "a select group of inner-circle advisors," helping to set defense policy. President Reagan was one of the first persons to join, and I could be practically the second.

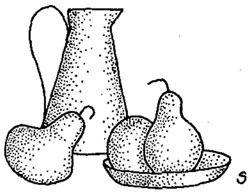
A hundred-dollar contribution would make me a "state advisor," two hundred and fifty dollars a "special advisor," five hundred dollars a "senior advisor." Who would remain a "senior advisor" when five hundred dollars more would make one a "chairmen's advisor" and get one an unusually distinguished wall plaque? The letter puts it with great honesty: "Membership on our select Advisory Board is an investment of time and money." If I were going to join, I'd go for the top rung, "chairmen's advisor," right off. Otherwise, I might have trouble raising the money to better myself later on, with all the Democrats trying to make political hay in an election year.

But the answer is no. Yes, the plaque is beautiful, and I would enjoy helping to set defense policy. But if they really, really want my defense know-how working for them, I feel, they should offer to take me out on a date, too. There must be a nice dinner theatre around Washington to which some senator could take me one-on-one to "Annie" or something, providing a corsage and all the little luxuries that make someone feel special, and not just in the context of strategic planning. Our board will be in touch with the Defense Department, after all, not the Small Business Administration. And we defense people—obscure though we may have been just a short time ago—deserve that special treatment after a long day poring over relief maps of the Ukraine, or explaining to Weinberger how the Stealth plane works. Or do they think we're some of those "Nuclear Freezers," who'll work day and night just for the sake of the thing, then go home all tired out on the bus?

•

AND our friend whose daughter is an artist on Cape Cod and supports herself by doing masonry or digging quahogs and bay scallops has passed on a recent letter from her:

I was trying to paint portraits, but the last commission I did, the guy looked at the painting and started screaming and yelling and refused to pay for it. I thought it was a very good painting, so I was too upset to sue him or kill him, and I started cutting lawns, and that was O.K., but I got fired because my car broke too often and I couldn't afford to get it fixed. I had to jump-start the car by pushing it until I got it rolling downhill, then jump in, slam the door, and hit the clutch, but I couldn't do that unless I parked it on top of a hill first, and I couldn't always find a hill—especially on Cape Cod. The last time the car died was in the post-office parking lot, and there was no hill. I waited for somebody to help, but the first person to come out of the post office was a grim-looking fisherman, and the next was a frail old lady, and the third was a harassed-looking housewife. Then I saw a couple of teen-age girls coming across the street carrying groceries. I decided to be forceful. "My car is stuck," I explained, "and we're going to push it." They looked at each other, put down their bags, and pushed. I jumped in, the engine started, and I sailed out into the traffic, where the car died again, blocking one lane. Cars were honking and swerving, and traffic backed up in both directions. The girls helped me push the car back into the parking lot, and we did it all over again. This time, it worked. When I looked back, I thought the girls looked sort of proud, and very relieved. Then, in July, I got evicted from the cabin where I've lived for five years now. The owner wanted to live in it. I'd been paying a hundred dollars a month rent, but in summer the rents around here are at least twelve hundred a month, so I moved in with a guy I used to quahog with, who was sharing a small house with a woman whose husband was away in the merchant marine. She had been a deep-sea fisherman—gill-netting—but her husband didn't want her going out on the ocean for more than one day at a time, so she gave up fishing and started making strawberry jam. Around then, I heard that an ice-cream parlor in town needed some signs for outside, so I did some designs in watercolor and showed them, and the owner said go ahead. But I didn't have anywhere to paint now. I couldn't work in the bedroom, because the paint smell was too strong, or in the living room or kitchen, because that's where the woman was making her jam—there were pots of paraffin, glass jars everywhere, and steaming vats of strawberries bubbling on the stove. So I started



painting the signs outdoors on the grass. I did a nice pink ice-cream soda and an outstanding sandwich with lettuce and tomatoes, but I found out I didn't really know how to letter, and my hand was shaking from all the coffee I was drinking, and leaves and grass and dirt fell on the wet paint, and insects kept walking across the signs and getting stuck, so I went inside and worked in the cellar, which was moldy and dark, with one light bulb and lots of shadows. That was all right, but when I finally got the signs done, and brought them out into the sunlight, all the mistakes showed up, and I had to correct everything. Finally, I took the signs in to the ice-cream parlor, so I could get paid. The owner liked them. But then a fuzzy-faced teen-ager who was standing on a ladder arranging boxes looked down and said, "Hey, the lettering's crooked. I don't like that blue. I think you should move the word 'dishes' over a few inches." The owner took another look. "I think he's right," she said. I stared at her. My lip began to tremble, and my eyes began to fill up. "Never mind," she said. "I'll give you the check right now." I took the money, went out, and drove home. They hung the signs on either side of the front door. A few days later, I took a friend over to see them. One of the signs had been stolen. Around here, that's a real compliment.

• •

Green and Yellow and

"I AM very scared always," Jean-Marc Roget, the president of Chartreuse Diffusion, told us last week. "Only three of the brothers know how to make it—nobody else knows the recipe. And each morning they drive together to the distillery. And they drive a very old car. And they drive it very badly." Mr. Roget is in charge of marketing Chartreuse, the green and yellow French liqueurs; he was in New York last week for a public-relations gathering at the Hotel Parker Meridien marking the nine-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Carthusian Order, which keeps the secret and produces the liqueurs at its distillery, at Voiron, in the French Alps. "I am hoping they write many notes about how to make it," said Mr. Roget, who has never even been allowed in the room where the herbs and flowers—a hundred and thirty of them—used in the drinks are sifted and measured. "I really have no idea what it is I sell. The fathers at the monastery are the shareholders. Two weeks ago, I went to Mass there for the first time. The monks were all kneeling on the floor, and I said to myself, 'This is the oddest stockholders' meeting on earth,' but I did not laugh about it, because it was very silent there."

The last time we sat down and thought about Chartreuse was in 1956, when we watched two connoisseurs compare vintages from the late nineteenth century, before the Carthusians were temporarily expelled from France, with Chartreuse bottled after 1941, when regular production resumed. At that time, there were only green and yellow Chartreuses (the green Chartreuse is the chartreuse Chartreuse), but this summer, in honor of the grand anniversary, a new brew has gone on sale. "Depending on how you hold the glass, it might be yellow or it might be green. But it is really something else that has no name," Mr. Roget explained. "The taste of Chartreuse is impossible to define, too," he went on. "Our German distributor had a contest for who could best describe the taste, but no one could. I mean, they gave someone the prize eventually, but he did a very poor job."

Chartreuse began, in the eighteenth century, as an elixir boasting restorative powers, and a hundred-and-forty-two-proof brand is still bought for medicinal use in most of the world. "The American government, though, demands that we prove it works," explained Duane Maas, the United States importer and distributor, who was present to celebrate.

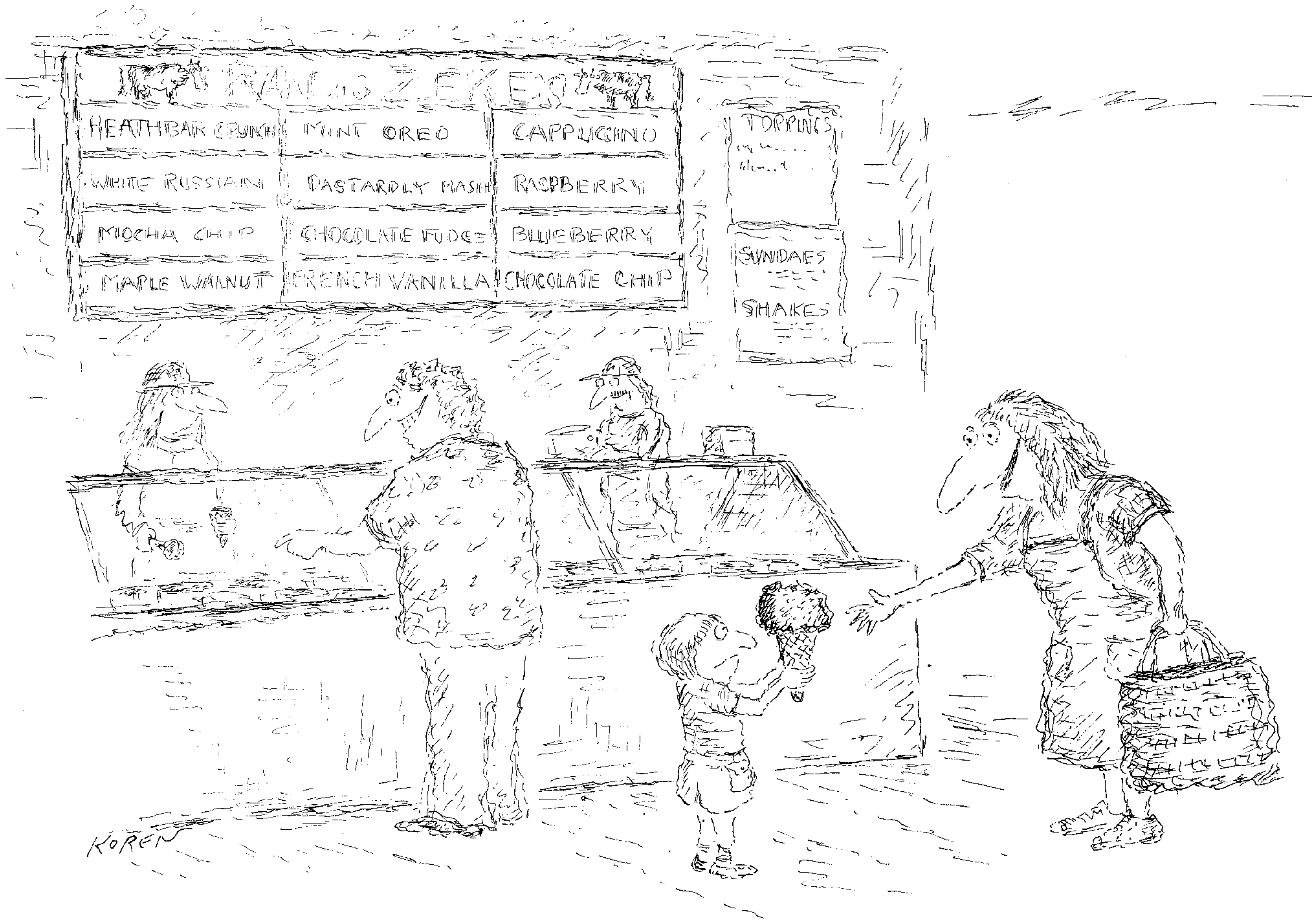
"Prove it works!" Mr. Roget said, with a violent shrug. "How could we prove that? All we have is stacks of letters from ninety-year-old women saying they take a few drops on a sugar cube every day."

A quarter century after the monks started making the elixir, they began producing the green liqueur, and three-quarters of a century after that they devised the yellow; these have met with widespread success and widespread imitation. "Four men came to see me from the Russian Embassy one day last year," Mr. Roget said. "I showed them pictures of the monks. First of all, the Russians couldn't believe that they prayed all day. 'All day!' they said. And, second, they said Chartreuse was Russian. They sent me a bottle—on the label it said 'Chartreuse' in Russian. But it didn't taste so good. One way the monks have kept their secret is by allowing no tourists inside the monastery. That also keeps it quiet there. The monks are allowed to talk only one hour a week. Not many men visitors go in, and in nine hundred years only two women have done so, both with special permission of the Pope. They were Queen Victoria of England and Queen Wilhelmina of Holland. Victoria became the first because she was a very big queen and it was hard to say no. But what she mainly noticed was how cold it was, because it was winter—there has never been any central heating. The liqueur, she said, is good for keeping you warm."

The Interpretative Miller of Philipsburg Manor

ON a crisp blue day not long ago, we drove to Philipsburg Manor, an early-eighteenth-century historic site in North Tarrytown run by Sleepy Hollow Restorations, to keep an appointment with Charles Howell, who operates the site's reconstructed eighteenth-century grist and flour mill, which, along with a manor house, a barn, and twenty-one acres of farmland, is what remains of an estate that once consisted of fifty-two thousand acres along the Hudson. Since this is the time of year when grain is most bounteous, we had expected to find him busy over his millstones; however, since it is a lean time of year for tourists we found the mill empty and Mr. Howell waiting for us by the site's orientation building, a modern structure. A fifth-generation miller in his family, which hails from Staffordshire, England, Mr. Howell proved to be a burly, red-faced man wearing a black three-cornered hat, a dusty-looking gray wool coat, loose-fitting brown pantaloons of linen and wool, and a pair of black leather shoes with big buckles. "It's supposed to be what millers wore in those days, the curators say," he explained apologetically, in a thick Midlands accent.

To cross the Pocantico River, which flows behind the orientation building to join the Hudson half a mile downstream, we followed him along a narrow wooden walkway rimming



"Nicholas, I want to thank you for sharing."

• •

a small wooden dam. Upstream lay a broad, still millpond, reflecting not only the blue sky overhead but also cars flicking along Route 9, which parallels the pond's far end. At the end of the walkway was the manor house, of whitewashed brick, and just downstream was the mill, a wooden structure. On its near side, a brown wooden wheel, eleven feet in diameter, was so situated that water in a chute—what Mr. Howell called the flume—leading from the millpond would hit the wheel just below center. At the moment, the gate in the flume was shut, so the wheel was not turning.

We said that it was a pretty place.

"It's one of the prettiest spots you'll ever see," Mr. Howell said with enthusiasm. "Around most mills, it's very pretty. They've always been great subjects for painters. Constable painted a lot of mills in England."

We asked him about his ancestors.

"The first record of a Howell in milling was a certain Howell of Fayvall, who was awarded the lease of the Dee Mills, in Chester, by the king in the fourteenth century—though I don't know if he was an ancestor of mine," Mr. Howell said, leaning against a railing midway across the dam, the better to admire the view. "I know that my great-great-grandfather was a millwright and blacksmith in Suffolk in 1844, for he is mentioned in a directory for that year. His name was John Howell, and his son William, my great-grandfather, ran several mills—in particular, the Albion Mills, just north of Ipswich, in Suffolk. He had two mills there, both wind-powered—one for spice and one for flour and corn. He got someone else to run the spice mill, for he couldn't stand the dust. We have a picture of him—a kindly-looking man with side-whiskers. His son Edmund John, my grandfather, was a good miller, too. He started at his father's mills, and then he worked for a short time at the Dee Mills, where that fourteenth-century Howell had been. Ever hear of the Miller of Dee? Then, in 1883, he took the tenancy of Farewell Mill, near Lichfield, Staffordshire, and later he moved on to a water-powered mill at Great Haywood, also in Staffordshire. My father, William, who was born in 1884, eventually took over the mill at Haywood, but it failed in the Depression. He took jobs in other mills, but things were not going well. Steam-powered roller mills were getting most of the business. I was born in 1926, at Brook End Mill, Longdon, near Rugely, Staffordshire. When I was fourteen, I started working with Father at Four Mills, in Staffordshire. It was water-powered—two wheels, four pairs of stones. One of my jobs was to dress the stones—to chisel out the grooves in their inner faces. When Father died, in 1965, I was at the Worston Mills, which was a combination of water and diesel; we were in the business of grinding feed for cattle. Times were hard. What did me in, though, was the Water Resources Act, passed in the sixties, which meant that the government charged us for the water we used. That was a corker, that was! I moved here in 1969."

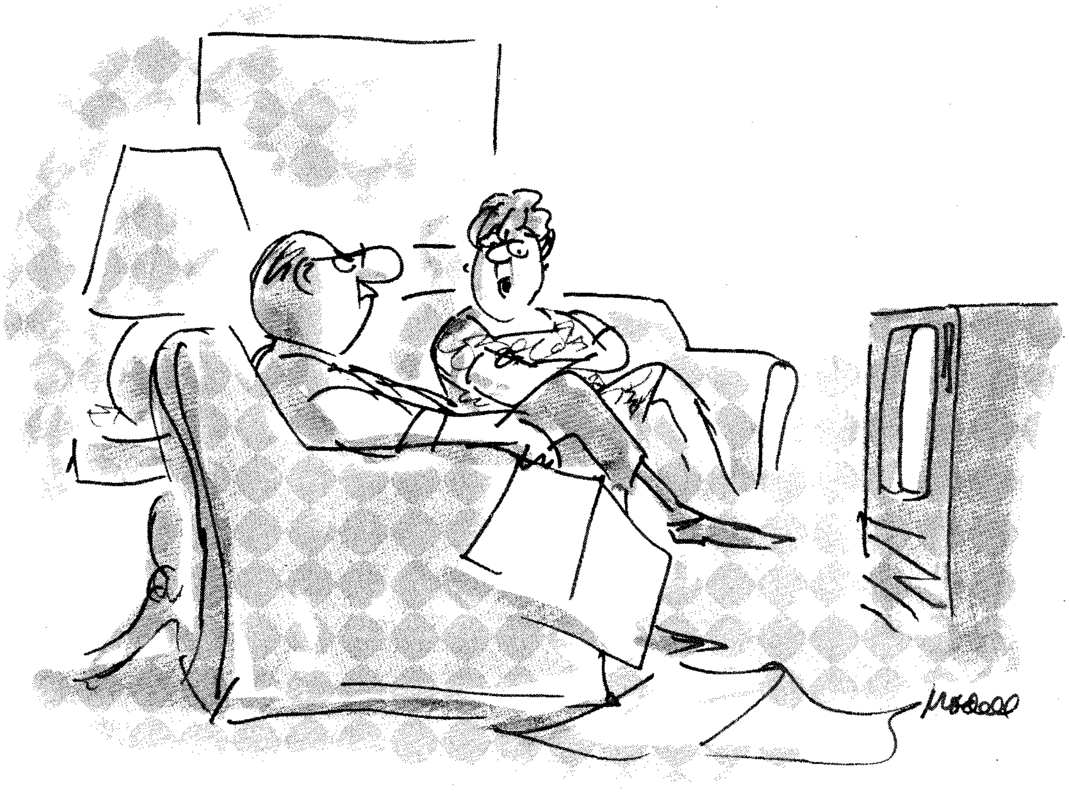
Mr. Howell waved us on across the dam, and we stepped off the walkway onto half of an old millstone set into the ground as a flagstone. It was made of German lava, he told us, and had been brought over by Dutch settlers in the seventeenth century. "The millstones we use now are from France—from a quarry near La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, a town on the Marne about fifty kilometres east of Paris, which is where the best stones have always come from," he said. "I used stones from the same place as a boy at Four Mills. They make a whiter flour, because they are not as abrasive as German, English, or American stones, which tear the tough brown outer coating—the bran—off the grains of wheat, powdering it so that it is difficult to remove from the flour. The French stones—they're freshwater quartz, slightly translucent and very hard—shell the bran off in broad flakes, which are easy to sift out." He led the way into the mill, which was dark, dusty, and cool, and was filled with the compelling, almost addictive smell of grain, and up to a pair of millstones, each weighing over a ton, that had been laid side by side on the floor, where he was in the process of dressing them. He ran his fingers over the furrows he had cut into the hard stone so that the grain—when it was poured through a hole in the center of the upper stone—would be ground properly and the flour channelled outward to drop off the lower millstone's edge. He happened to feel a rough spot in one furrow, whereupon he turned on a light overhead, picked up a formidable-looking hammer made of a steel chisel set in a wooden handle, and whacked at the furrow until the sparks flew. "Ever hear the expression 'Show me your metal'?" he said. "In the old days, that's what a miller would say before he hired a stonecutter. He'd examine the man's hands, because if the man was an experienced dresser he'd have bits of metal embedded in the backs of them, from the sparks, which are flying splinters of steel from the chisel." Mr. Howell showed us his metal—black specks along the backs of his hands, which otherwise looked to us unexpectedly soft, pudgy, and uncallused.

We asked him how the milling he did today differed from the milling he had done as a young man in England.

"It's very different," he said. "Then it was big quantities; now it's small quantities. Then I was a production miller; today I'm what I call an interpretative miller. The change suits me."

We asked him whether the interpreting always went smoothly, and he said that it generally did. "Every once in a while, I get a wise guy who wants to know if the electric light or the telephone is authentic eighteenth-century," he went on. "I usually tell him that they didn't have them here in those days, but we did in England. Mostly, though, the tourists are polite, interested people. Once, a group of Russian students who were passing through rescued a cat from the millrace downstream—he had been asleep in one of the buckets of the waterwheel, and I had started it up without knowing he was there."

Just then, a large busload of elderly women came into the mill, and Mr. Howell started it running for them: he pushed down a lever opening the flume gate outside, so that water flowed under the wheel, which began to turn, rotating a drive shaft—the trunk of a white oak—that ran under the floor of the building, to turn at its far end a pair of wooden gears seven feet in diameter, which meshed with a pair of smaller gears. These smaller gears, Mr. Howell told the assembled women, were called lantern pinions—because they looked like a pair of lanterns surrounded by bars—and they transferred the force vertically; an upright spindle through each lantern passed up through the floor to turn the millstones. There were ordinarily two pairs of stones, but, of course, one pair had been disassembled; the other pair, hidden inside a large wooden drum, was grinding now. From a large wooden hopper overhead, kernels of ripe golden corn, harvested on a Philipsburg field nearby, dropped through a hole in the center of the drum and a matching hole in the upper millstone; a golden rain of cornmeal poured out of a spout at one side of the drum and into a meal trough. The cornmeal had a consistency at once dry and moist, like sawdust. The flow of corn into the millstone was kept constant by the vertical spindle, which ended in a square rod whose corners bumped repetitively against a shoe under the hopper, making a rat-a-tat-tat noise. "It's called the damsel, because it chatters," Mr. Howell told the women. They nodded, and none of them smiled. He had to shout, for the mill was full of noises: the splashing of water outside, the rumble of the big drive shaft, the grinding of the millstones, the chatter-



"What makes you think Joan Rivers invites her guests with you in mind?"

ing of the damsel, and the gentle hissing of the flour as it cascaded from the spout into the meal trough.

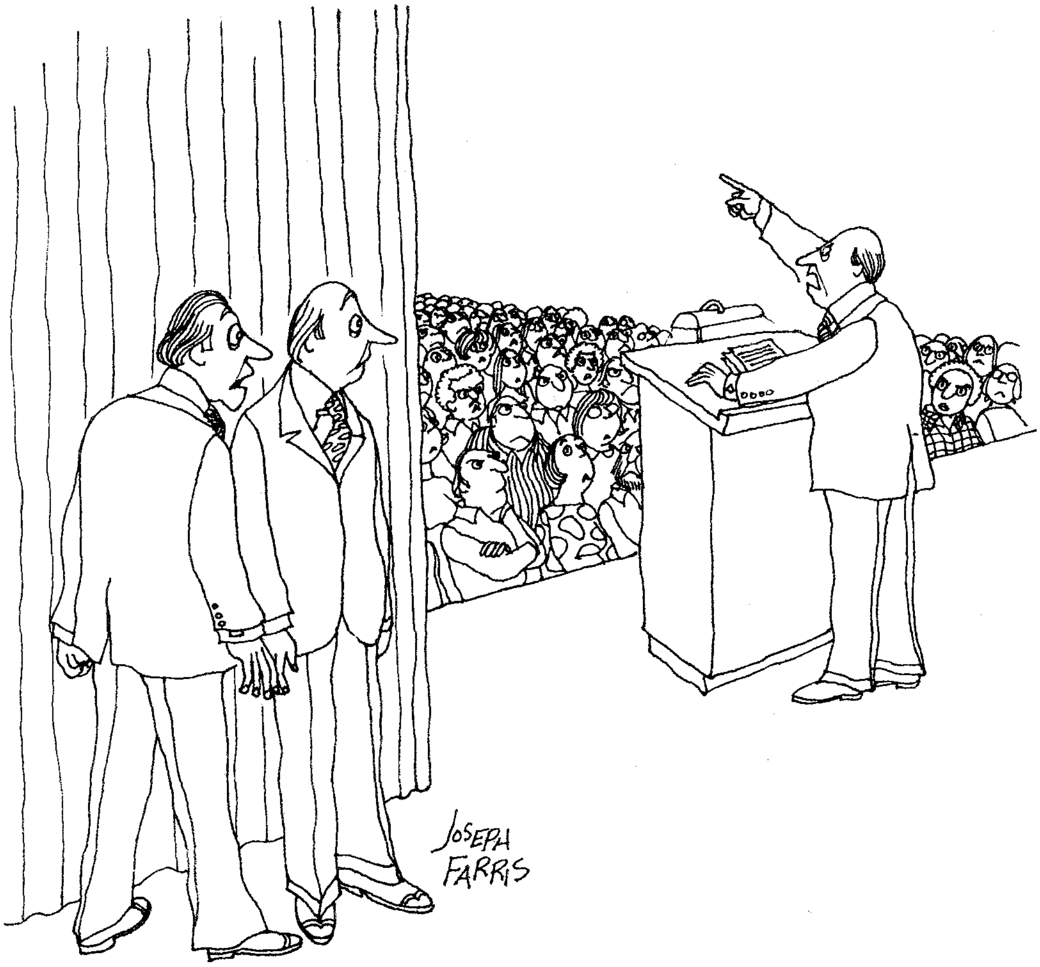
Later, when Mr. Howell shut the gate in the flume, and the waterwheel stopped and the grinding ceased, we realized that the entire building had been vibrating. In the sudden stillness, the women's voices were cacophonous—still raised to be heard over the noise.

"What's this?" asked a woman with gray hair swept back in a bun, pointing to what looked like a small pair of millstones with a handle embedded in the top stone.

"That's a quern, Ma'am," Mr. Howell said. He grasped the handle and, with a heave, rotated it. "In the old days, before they had water mills or windmills, people had to grind their meal by hand."

Another woman paused on her way out to ask whether it was true that millers used to brew malt in their mills.

"Oh, yes, Ma'am," Mr. Howell said. "They'd drink a lot to keep the dust down. Notorious drinkers, millers were."



"Good God! He's giving the white-collar voters' speech to the blue collars."

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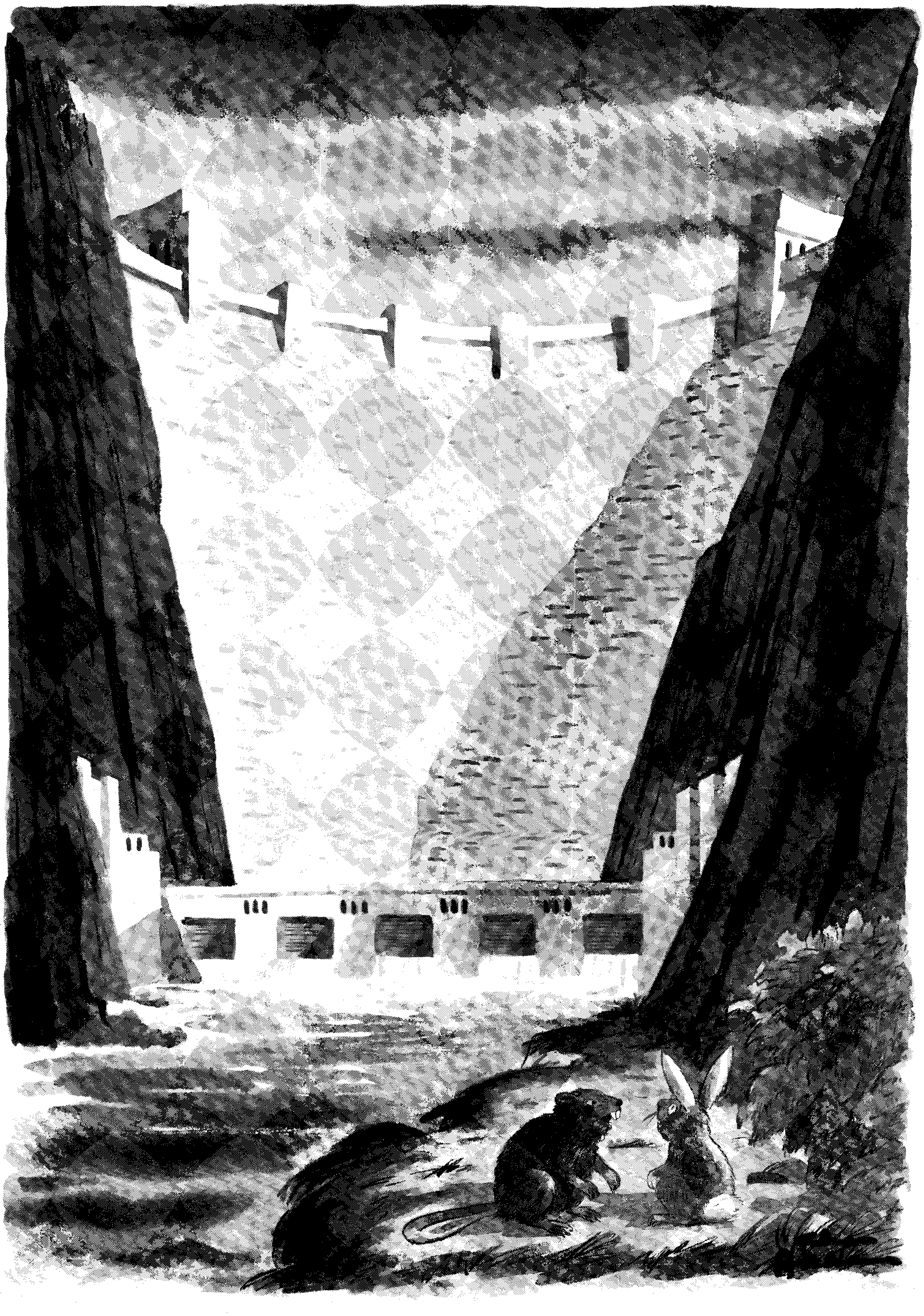
Amazing

A NEW McDonald's restaurant has opened in Times Square. For the most part, it resembles other McDonald's restaurants, in other places, in that it offers Filet-O-Fish and Egg McMuffin and through early September was featuring two special summertime sauces for dipping Chicken McNuggets into, the better of which was made with jalapeño peppers. But this McDonald's also has a TV screen up on the menu board, which is something we've never seen before. We waited in line, and we watched the film, which showed some people buying and enjoying McDonald's sundaes, and then showed the Filet-O-Fish in closeup, and golden fries. It was the dullest film we've ever seen.

After lunch, we walked across Broadway to the sidewalk in front of the Majestic Theatre, where a man called The Amazing Kreskin was teaching four chorus girls from the show "42nd Street" to lift a man—the "42nd Street" star Jerry Orbach—off a chair with just two fingers apiece (a total of eight fingers). The comedienne Phyllis Diller once said, in her joking way, that The Amazing Kreskin was "a male witch and should be burned at the stake;" in truth, he is a mentalist who has made a total of nearly three hundred appearances on the Mike Douglas, Merv Griffin, and Johnny Carson shows. A favorite trick: he leaves the room, the audience hides his paycheck for the appearance, and if he can't locate it upon his return he goes unpaid. Just recently, at a show in New Jersey, Amazing, through the power of suggestion, managed to convince a number of people that the woman who had shot J.R. in the television series "Dallas" was present in the room. "I had an eighty-six-year-old grandmother demanding that we call the police," Amazing later told us. Amazing believes in the power of concentration, and has found that when people apply themselves they can do improbable things. "A girl could lift a refrigerator out of a burning building if someone was in it. But if she was only trying to save some food from the fire it wouldn't work," he explains. This day, he had been urging the showgirls to concentrate on lifting Mr. Orbach at the count of three. "When I say 'three,' think light-light-light!" he said. He warned us spectators not to expect too much. "It will only last fleeting seconds. The time in the air will be very short," he said. At the count of three, the girls, lifting under the armpits and the knees, hoisted a beaming Mr. Orbach maybe fourteen inches above his chair for some fleeting seconds, maybe two, and then they put him back down. It was all right.

A man who had been standing on the sidewalk watching came up to The Amazing Kreskin and said, "I was wondering—could you do that without the girls? Just lift him up with your brain waves?"

"No," said Amazing. "That would be magic."



"I didn't actually build it, but it was based on my idea."

END OF THE TRAIL

THE last cigarette smokers in America were located in a box canyon south of Donner Pass in the High Sierra by two federal tobacco agents in a helicopter who spotted the little smoke puffs just before noon. One of them, the district chief, called in the ground team by air-to-ground radio. Six men in camouflage outfits, members of a crack anti-smoking joggers unit, moved quickly across the rugged terrain, surrounded the bunch in their hideout, subdued them with tear gas, and made them lie face down on the gravel in the hot August sun. There were three females and two males, all in their mid-forties. They had been on the run since the adoption of the Twenty-eighth Amendment.

The chief, a trim, muscular man in neatly pressed khakis who carried a riding crop, paced back and forth along the line of motionless shoe soles. "What are you people using for brains? Can't you read?" he snapped, flicking the crop at their ankles. He bent down and snatched up an empty pack of Marlboros and thrust it in the face of a pale, sweaty man whose breath came in short, terrified gasps. "Look at this! This warning has been there for decades! Want me to read it to you? Want me to give you the statistics? What does it take to make you understand? Look at me! Speak up! I can't hear you!"

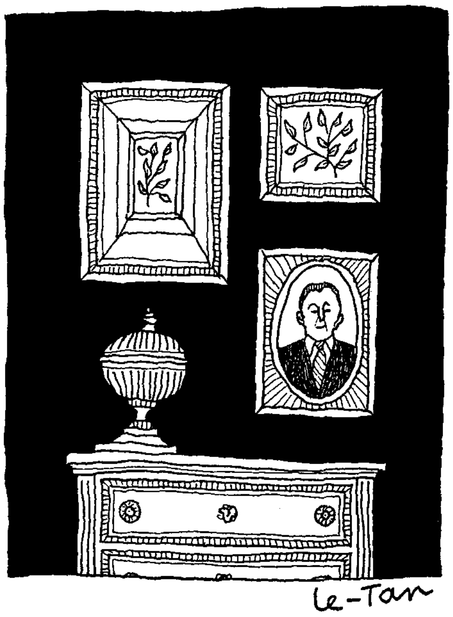
In fact, the smokers had been very subdued long before the acrid tear-gas fumes drifted into their hideout, a narrow cave near the canyon mouth. They knew the end was near. Days before, they had lost radio contact with the only other band of smokers they knew of: five writers holed up in an Oakland apartment. It had been three weeks since the Donner group's last supply drop from the air, forty pounds of barbecued ribs, ten Picnic Tubs of Jimbo deep-fried chicken, and six cartons of smokes, all mentholated. Agents who searched the cave found exactly two cigarettes. There was not a single shred of tobacco found in any of the thousands of discarded butts. The two cigarettes were hidden in the lining of a sleeping bag, and the general disorder in the cave—clothing and personal effects strewn from hell to breakfast—indicated that some smokers had searched frantically for a smoke that very morning. Blackened remnants of what appeared to be cabbage leaves lay in the smoldering campfire.

"Move 'em out of here!" the chief said. "They disgust me."

AMONG the personal effects were four empty packs, carefully slit open, the blank insides covered with handwriting. An agent picked them up and put them in a plastic bag, for evidence. They read:

Dear Lindsay & Matt—This is to let y. know I'm OK & w. friends tho how this w. reach you I dont know. 5 of us are in the mts (dont know where). I never thot it wld come to this. All those yrs as ashtrays vanishd fr parties & old pals made sarc remarks & FAA crackd down & smoke sect. became closet, I thot if I just was discreet & smokd in prv & took mints I'd get by but then yr dad quit & I had to go undergrnd. Bsmnt, gar., wet twls, A/C, etc. Felt guilty but contd, couldnt stop. Or didnt. Too late for that now. Gotta go on midnt watch. More soon. Love, Mother.

My Dear Children—Down to 1 cart. PlMls. Not my fav. Down to 1 cg/day. After supper. Hate to say it but it tastes fant. So rich, so mild. I know you never approvd. Sorry. In 50s it was diffrnt, we all smokd. Felt like movies. So gracefl, tak'g cg from pk, the mtch, the lite, one smooth move. Food, sex, then smoke. Lng drags. Lrnd Fr. exh. Then sudd. it was 82 and signs apprd (Thanx for Not S). In my home! Kids naggng like fishwives & yr dad sudd. went out for track. I felt *ambushed*. Bob Dylan smokd, Carson, Beatles. I mean WE'RE NOT CRIMINALS. Sorry. Too late now. More soon. Love, Mother.



Dear Kids—This may be last letter, theyre closing in. Planes o'head every day now. Dogs in dist. Men w. ldspkrs. Flares. Oakland chapt got busted last pm. Was w. them on radio when feds came. Reminded me of when yr dad turnd me in. After supper. Knew he was nut but didnt know he was creep. Cops surr. our hse, I snk away thru bushes. No time to say g-b to y. Sorry. Wld you believe I quit twice yrs ago, once fr 8 mo. I'm not a terrible wom. y'know. Sorry. Know this is hard on y. Me too. We're down to 2 pks & everybody's tense. Got to go chk perimtr. Goodbye. Love, Mother.

Dear L & M—This is it. They saw us. I have one left and am smokng it now. Gd it tastes gd. My last cg. Then its all over. I'm OK. I'm ready. Its a better thng I do now than I hv ever done. I love you both. . . .

THE five smokers were handcuffed and transported to a federal detention camp in Oregon, where they were held in pup tents for months. They were charged with conspiracy to obtain, and willful possession of, tobacco, and were convicted in minutes, and were sentenced to write 20,000 words apiece on the topic "Personal Integrity" by a judge who had quit cigarettes when the price went to 35 cents and he could not justify the expense.

The author of the letters was soon reunited with her children, and one night, while crossing a busy intersection near their home in Chicago, she saved them from sure death by pulling them back from the path of a speeding car. Her husband, who had just been telling her she could stand to lose some weight, was killed instantly, however.

—Garrison Keillor

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BLOCK THAT METAPHOR!

[*From United Teachers, a publication of the United Teachers of Dallas*]

We know that the real insult is in the salaries paid to teachers. But what teachers don't seem to know, is that they are compounding that same insult by their timorousness at being checked out while they are at the controls of their classroom, and while they are wielding the educational scalpel upon their students.

ORR MOUNT

EVERYBODY knew Monty Gault. He was the local small-time builder, joiner, and handyman. No one round about the town of Dryfask thought twice about whom to get if they wanted a wall built, a floor laid, or a door hung. He could do anything connected with houses. When the Hendersons moved into Orr Mount and ran into trouble with the big contracting firm they'd hired from Glasgow, it was Monty they were advised to call for help.

"It's a funny thing," Monty said to John Henderson, "but I haven't seen this house up close since I was a boy."

Orr Mount was a house about a mile west of Dryfask and four hundred yards off the road, at the end of its own private lane. It was a substantial stone building in terrible disrepair, set in a garden that had surrendered to the encroachments of the woodland that hid the house from the road.

"I've been let down," John Henderson said. "It was two weeks ago before those fellows even made a start and did the damp courses. Now they're telling me it'll be July before they can come back."

"You mean you accepted this estimate?" Monty whistled at the list of estimated costs that Henderson handed him and groaned at the total. "Are you bound to this?"

"There were harsh words," Henderson said, "but my wife gave them the heave. Anyway, that's the estimate you've got to beat."

"I'll work it out on paper," Monty said, "and let you know."

"Could you give me a rough idea?" There was a quiet but worried urgency in Henderson's voice. "My wife's annoyed that it's taking so long," he said, almost confidingly. He sounded like a man who had been blamed. "We're living in squalor."

"I'll be cheaper," Monty said. "A lot cheaper. Frankly, I wouldn't have the brass neck to ask a price like that." He slapped the estimate sheet. "I'm a one-man band," he went on to warn. "I can start right away, but there's a lot to do, and it'll take time. I can do it, though. Stonework, roofing, joinery, electrics—no problem, Mr. Henderson. I'll need help from time to time, but day labor's not hard to come by round here."

Henderson was in his mid-forties—a few years older than Monty Gault, six inches taller, and graying but without distinction. He looked as much at home in his blue business suit as Monty Gault did in his faded off-brown dungarees and ancient jacket.

"It's a fine house," Monty said, but Henderson looked at it without showing pleasure or any pride of ownership. He looked at it as though it amounted to nothing more than a drain on his bank balance and months of inconvenience until the work on it was finished.

"I didn't know the folk who lived here," Monty said. "I pass your road end often enough, so I used to see their car come in or out. They were the sort of people you know by their make of car. I didn't even know they'd moved," he said. "I thought maybe they'd changed their car. I'd forgotten it's so big a house. I hope you got it cheap, Mr. Henderson."

"At the time, I thought it was a bargain," Henderson said. "But yesterday the wind slammed the back door and five slates fell on the doorstep. It's been empty for over a year."

Monty cast his eyes over the roof. He noticed a woman he took to be Henderson's wife withdraw from an upstairs window when he looked up.

"When can you start?" Henderson asked.

"As soon as you like," Monty said. "Don't you want a price first?"

"As long as you're a lot cheaper," Henderson said, "you can start tomorrow."

AT least three months of guaranteed income was a windfall that Monty Gault had not expected. Nor was it often that he had the satisfaction of renovating an entire house, he told his wife that night.

"I've a funny feeling about that job, though. There's something I don't like there."

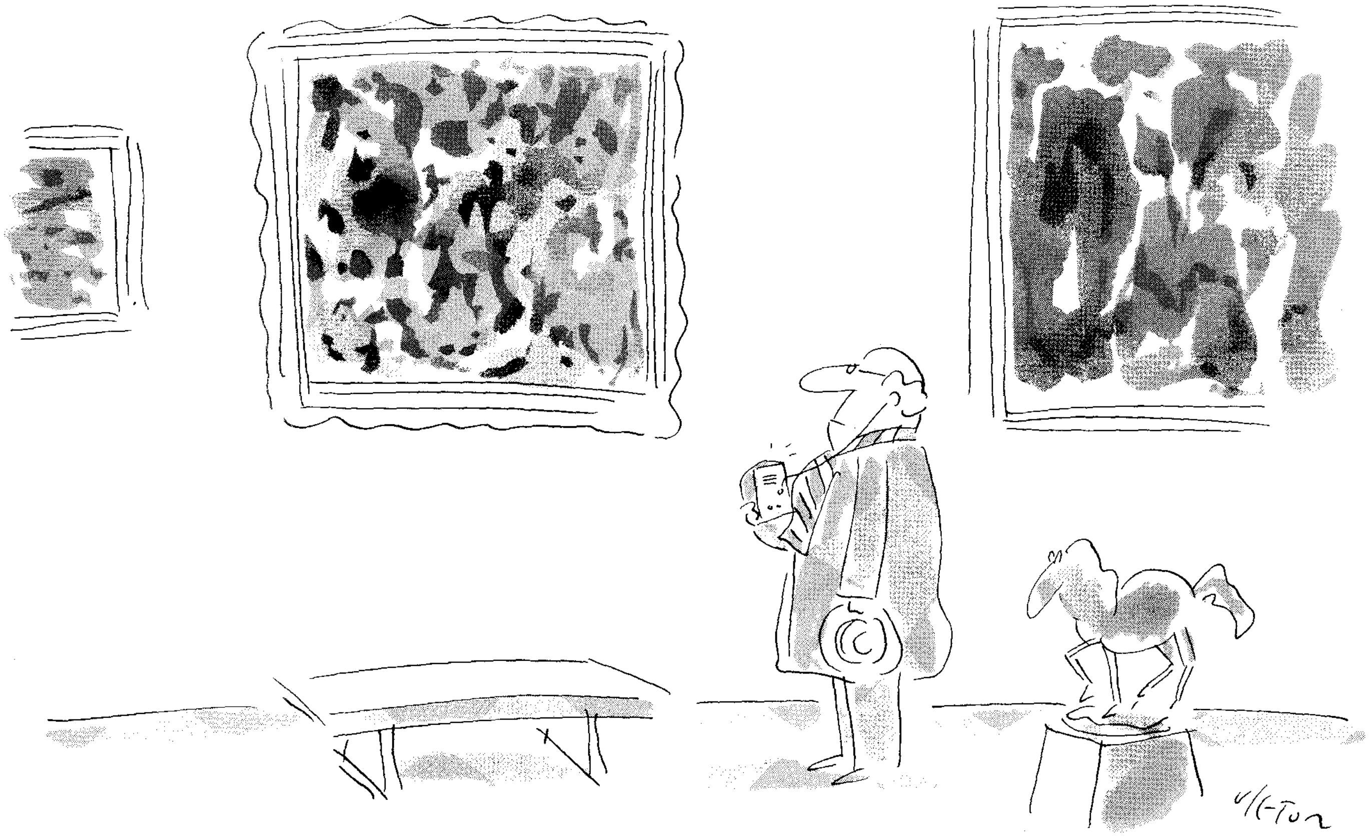
"Steady work," Mary Gault said, "and you're complaining?"

"It's Henderson. I didn't take to the man."

"That's you all over," Mary said. "You're happiest when you're working for someone you like, and then it shames you to take their money."

Quick and capable at what he did, Monty enjoyed an appreciative cup of tea with his many occasional employers. He liked his days to be neighborly and sociable. On longer jobs, his temporary near-membership in another family gave him pleasure. He revelled in their talk and gossip; he was often delighted by the eccentric routines of different households, moved by their sadnesses, and dispirited by their tensions. Orr Mount and its occupants were outside the circle of shared local personality and behav-

Poet in a Raptus



"You're looking at one and a half million smackeroos."

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ior—they were tucked away from the life of the district—and Monty was unsure what he'd find there.

The following morning, Monty parked his van behind Orr Mount, curious to meet Mrs. Henderson for the first time.

She greeted him at the back door. "You know, of course, that we were let down?"

If anything, Mrs. Henderson looked more on edge than her husband. There was a depressed kind of determination about her that Monty thought might be a response to the discomfort of her surroundings. The kitchen would have been modern in 1920; its obsolescence had brought a heavy, dark shabbiness. Everything in the room was makeshift, and utensils were still mostly packed in tea chests and cardboard boxes. "It's filthy," she told Monty. "How could people live in dirt like this?" She glanced around her with disgust. "I want you to start with the window frames."

"Window frames first?" Monty asked. His ordering of priorities was different. He had come prepared, he told her, to make a start on the roof, some of which had grown a green patina. Here and there on its slipped slates there were distinct patches of moss. A sycamore sapling had taken root in the guttering. "Then, after the downspouts, and a bit of pointing, I thought the rewiring, Mrs. Henderson, followed by an all-out assault on this mess in here. The kitchen speaks for itself," he said.

But she was firm. "You don't have to live with the drafts in this house. No, the window frames. They rattle every time there's a puff of wind. *Then* the roof. But we'll see about that once you've shown me what you can do. You *can* make window frames?" she asked sternly.

"Oh, I've made a few in my time," Monty said, trying to laugh off his surprise at her question and her manner—both of which insisted that Mrs. Henderson would stand for no nonsense. "I take it you're the boss," he said. "I like to know who I'm working for."

"No, you're working for Mr. Henderson," she said.

But Monty was unconvinced. Why, he asked himself, do some wives pretend that their husbands are the masters of the household when it's as clear as day that they aren't? He had seen the relationship many times before. It was one of the facts of life that kept him in work: wives nagging their menfolk to fix things around the house, and then—when it dawned on them that their husbands wouldn't, or couldn't, do the work themselves—urging them to get Monty Gault in to do it.

"Well, I like my hot cups, Mrs. Henderson," he said. "I'm an old-fashioned tradesman. I'll work better for a steady flow—tea or coffee, but tea's preferred, a touch of milk and no sugar."

He spent the morning measuring the windows. Through the glass he observed in passing much of the work ahead. Floors dipped visibly where the joists were rotten. Naked light bulbs hung on the ends of old braided electric wire. Damp patches grayed through paint and paper on walls and ceilings. At each symptom of neglected husbandry, Monty winced in consternation.

He was on a ladder finishing with the upper windows when he looked into a room and saw a child in bed with bandaged eyes. Gauze and bedding obscured most of the child's face, and Monty could not tell if it was a boy or a girl. Apart from the child's

THE HEAVENLY FEAST

(Simone Weil 1909-43)

Only the stones at first
Seem to have a part in this,
And the little height of the grass
As it gains a fraction-inch

By gripping the shallow soil
With all the shocking might
Of hunger and of thirst,
As if the soil itself

Were all that's left on earth.
I think the grass alone
Can hold within its grasp
What matters to it most,

And still it looks bereft,
And famished as the stones.
I watch a stream of moths
Proceeding on their ways,

They carve out tortuous paths
As if they were intent
On entering unseen
And ever-smaller doors.

So four years into the war,
And cut off from the ones
Whose circumstance you felt
And suffering as yours,

You carved yourself a path
Through ever-narrowing doors
Of hunger and of thirst,
And entered them day by day,

Refusing all at first
But that ration of food
Your people could obtain
Behind the lines in France,

And then refusing that,
From summer into fall
You cut your ration back
To send your part to them,

Your part diminishing
To rations cut in half
And cut in half again,
And then nothing at all

But water at the last
Sipped for the nurse's sake,
You finally lacked the strength
Even to lift your hands:

Father, I cannot stand
To think of them and eat.
Send it to them, it is theirs.
Send this food for them,

For my people still in France.
And turned your face away,
As famished as the grass.
Only the stones at first

Seem to have a part in this,
And the little height of the grass
As it gains a fraction-inch.
But hidden in the grass,

As if the grass itself
Were giving out a cry,
I overhear the finch
Begin her native rhyme

And toil to paraphrase
Her version of your words.
It seems she tries and tries
Until the words come clear,

It is theirs, she seems to say,
Or that is what I hear,
And again: It is theirs, it is theirs.
And the plover joins in praise

With her fluttering, murmured prayers,
Send it to them, it is theirs.
And the blackbirds breaking wide
Take it up in their dialects

To sing you in their way,
I swear I can hear the words,
Send it to them, they say,
Send it to them, it is theirs,

Then all the birds of the air
Give thanks above your grave,
As if they were your cause
And those you meant to save,

As if the birds were there
In attendance at the end,
And, seeing the sacrifice,
Had borne your body up,

So wasted as it was,
To your chair in Paradise,
And saw, before they fled,
Your first breathtaking act

Before the heavenly feast,
The bread set at your place:
To refuse to eat till none
On earth has less than you,

Though God in pity take
Your hands and lift them toward
His table for your sake.
Father, they have no food,

Send it to them, it is theirs.
And the birds returning here
Give tongue to what they've heard,
They tell the grass and stones

And the stream of moths who carve
Their tortuous paths in the air.
But how in giving thanks
Can we calculate the worth

Of one who chose to starve?
You held within your grasp
Our hunger and our thirst.
And the little height of the grass

As it gains a fraction-inch
Seems to have a part in this.
It grips with a shocking might
What matters to the last,

As if the soil itself
Were all that's left on earth,
And all the earth were held
Within its famished grasp.

—Gjertrud Schnackenberg

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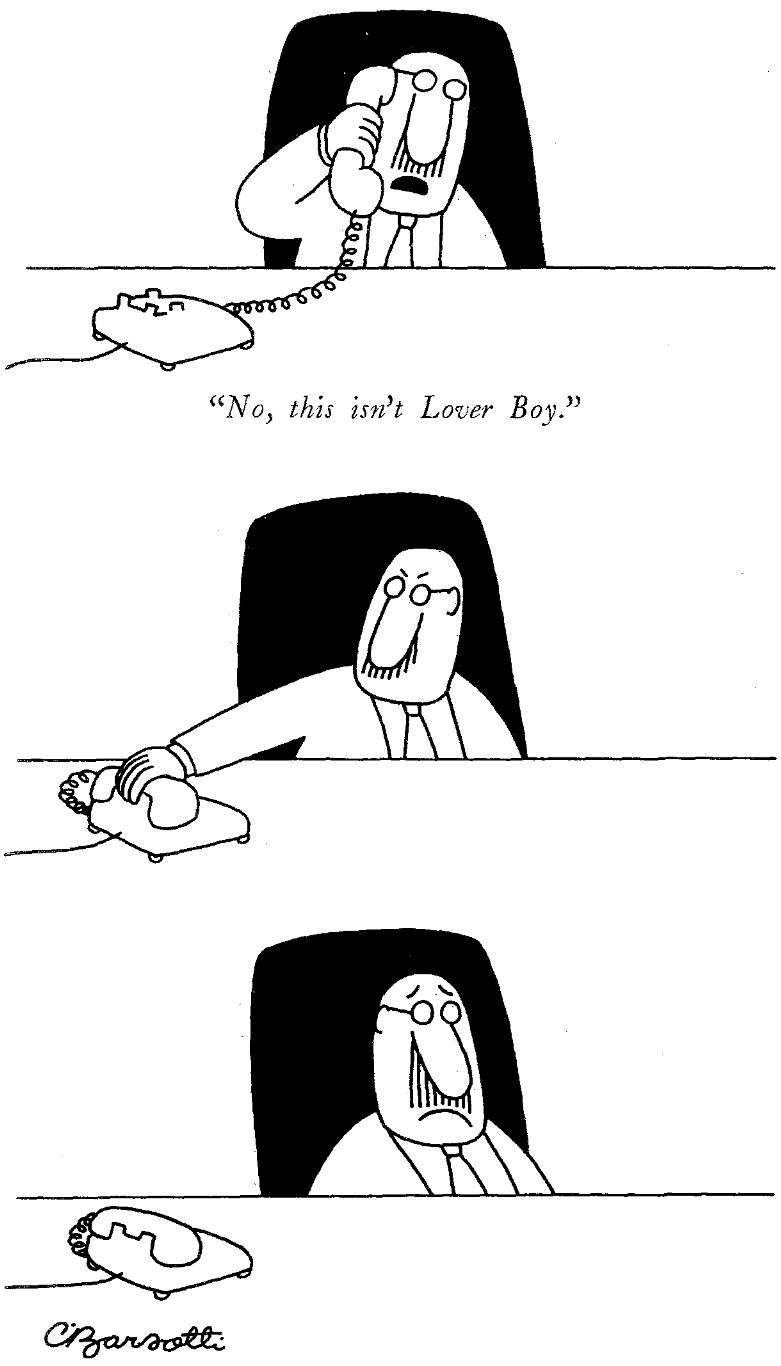
bed, a chair, and a small table, the room was raw and unfurnished. Monty stood frozen on his ladder and, through his slow shock, tried to understand what he saw. He checked over his measuring, and came down to find Mrs. Henderson.

"I was frightened I'd wake him up." He felt he should have been warned. "A noise at the window, and him with his eyes bandaged—that'd scare anybody. Did he have an accident?"

"He's blind," she said. "They tried an operation on his right eye. They did something to the other eye, too. I should've told you he was up there." She poured tea for Monty. "He's been at home with us for the past week. We couldn't postpone the operation—a thing like that can't be put off because a builder drags his heels and lets you down. And we couldn't stay on in our old house. We'd sold it, and the buyers needed to move in. We were tied to a date. Robin's thirteen. I knew the operation would be a waste of time."

"Has he always been blind?" Monty asked solicitously.

"No, not always." Her tone made it clear she did not want to talk anymore about her son. "I know exactly what I have in mind for this house," she said.



"*No, this isn't Lover Boy.*"

But, having changed the subject, she said, "You're probably wondering why we took the place, with all its problems."

"It's none of my business," Monty said. "I'm just the hired help."

"Good," she said. "I'm glad you know where we stand. It's difficult enough as it is without tradesmen carrying tales about us."

"You weren't keen on me doing the work here, were you?" Monty asked.

"You're a bit too local."

"Am I fired?"

"Robin will be much nearer a very good school for the blind. In fact, he's been a pupil there for almost a year. Living here saves me forty miles' driving a day. How long will the window frames take?"

"I don't know," Monty said. "A week to make, maybe more. And a week to set them in. Give or take a few days," he said.

"I want replicas of the original windows. Exact copies, and the best materials."

"His eyes were bandaged," Monty told his wife that night. "Great wads of gauze and surgical tape. Sound asleep. He didn't move a muscle. I was really shaken."

"You always take other people's troubles too much to heart," Mary said. "That'll be why you've been hard at it out there until the back of eight."

"That's a lot of window frames," he protested. "It'll be twelve hours a day until it's done."

"Make it last," Mary said. "We need the money."

• •

PROTECTED by plastic sheeting and tarpaulin, glazed, neatly primed and undercoated, the window frames arrived at Orr Mount on Saturday morning.

"I was wondering where you were! I was getting ready to come and find you," Henderson said. His tone was more irate than he could quite bring off.

"What's wrong?" Monty asked.

"Where've you been?" Henderson said.

"Me? Where'd you think? I've been in my yard, busy making your window frames." Monty opened the back of the van.

"That surely isn't all of them?" Henderson said truculently.

"It's a wee van," Monty said, pointing out the obvious. "I'll have to go back for the rest of them." In the past, he had endured inspections of his work by half-wits and incompetents, but Henderson's insinuation of indolence, or dishonesty, or the one excusing the other, was new to him. It rattled Monty. He turned round and saw Mrs. Henderson approaching. Monty said to her, "I'm sorry, Mrs. Henderson. I thought you understood I'd have to get the wood milled and then make up the window frames on my bench. That's the sort of job I do in the yard."

"I phoned," she said. "Three times I phoned you."

"The phone's in the house," Monty said, "and Mrs. Gault goes out to work."

"I hope the wood is properly seasoned," she said to her husband.

"Is it?" Henderson asked, passing on the suspicion.

Monty pulled a window frame free of its wadding. He was losing patience. "Tap that," he said sharply. "Go on, tap it." Henderson rapped on the wood. "Should they bend, buckle, or rot, you know where to come. Now, is that a perfect copy of that window over there, or is it not?"

Mrs. Henderson began counting them. "Where are the rest?"

"Maybe I could have got them all into the van, Mrs. Henderson, by squeezing them in, and scratching the undercoats, and risking a lot of broken glass on that bumpy joke you call a road. Now, I think the three of us ought to have a wee talk. There's someone round here thinks I've been swinging the lead, and I don't like it."

Mrs. Henderson walked away and left her husband to apologize.

"We hadn't seen hide or hair of you the whole week," Henderson said, venturing an explanation for his previous ill temper. His right leg trembled, his heel throbbing on the matted grass.

"I could see you were in a bad mood when you came back to collect the second batch of frames," Mary Gault told Monty later. "I suppose you just stood there and took it?"

"I did not," Monty said. "I gave them a piece of my mind."

"Tipped your forelock and said 'Sorry,' if I know you," Mary said. "They want you on the cheap. I expect they've made you think they're doing you a favor. Did they pay you?"

"Monday," Monty said.

"Eight or nine o' clock every night this week, and you have to wait until Monday?"

MONTY spent the following week installing the window frames. "They make a difference," he said to Henderson, who pretended unsuccessfully to show an interest.

"It wasn't easy," Monty went on. "I hope you don't think that the man I brought in to lend a hand was a matter of handouts to my pals. I needed him for the upstairs windows. How's your son, Mr. Henderson?"

"They're taking the bandages off in a few days." Henderson sighed. "Hospitals."

Monty said, "I can well understand how you haven't much heart for the work that's on hand here."

"I feel bad about putting a boy through an operation like that," Henderson said. "All that hope, for nothing."

"Still, you did it for the best," Monty said. "Well, once I've got these frames painted, I think the roof's next."

"You'll have to ask my wife," Henderson said. "She's got it all worked out."

"You might try putting your hand to the garden," Monty said. It sounded like homely, rural advice. "It could help take your mind off things." Henderson's look made Monty feel that either he had said the wrong thing or Henderson's troubles were inconsolable.

Before he went home that evening, Monty walked over the front garden, searching for an impression of what it must have been like under a conscientious owner. Weeds and wildness blended into the woodland at the garden's edge. Posts of a rotten fence were swamped by billows of runaway roses. An invasive bramblebrake, its briars and tendrils freshly green, crept toward unpruned shrubs. Daffodils and narcissi survived and bloomed here and there in the rampant neglect.

"You've a big job ahead of you here," Monty said to Mrs. Henderson, who had come out to him from the house. "Have you any plans for it?"

"First things first," she said. She looked around her with loathing. She picked up a forgotten rusted trowel from where it lay embedded in the grass and threw it into the brambles. "Ugh," she said.

While Monty painted the window frames at the back of the house, Mrs. Henderson painted those on the ground floor at the front. He was disappointed; he had hoped for her conversation. He went round to see how she was doing.

She wore a head scarf. Her hands were spotted with paint and a small smear marked her face.

"Oh dear," Monty said, noticing that her green sweater had recently touched wet white paint somewhere. "There's the spot," he said, pointing to the sill, where wrinkled paint was furred with strands of wool. "No, don't touch it. Wait until the frame dries, then sand it down lightly and then repaint it. Apart from that, you're doing fine."

After a moment, he went on. "I saw your boy reading a book in braille in there. That's wonderful. He showed me a bit about how it works. God forbid I should go blind, but if I did I ask myself if I could master that."

"Shouldn't you be working?" she asked.

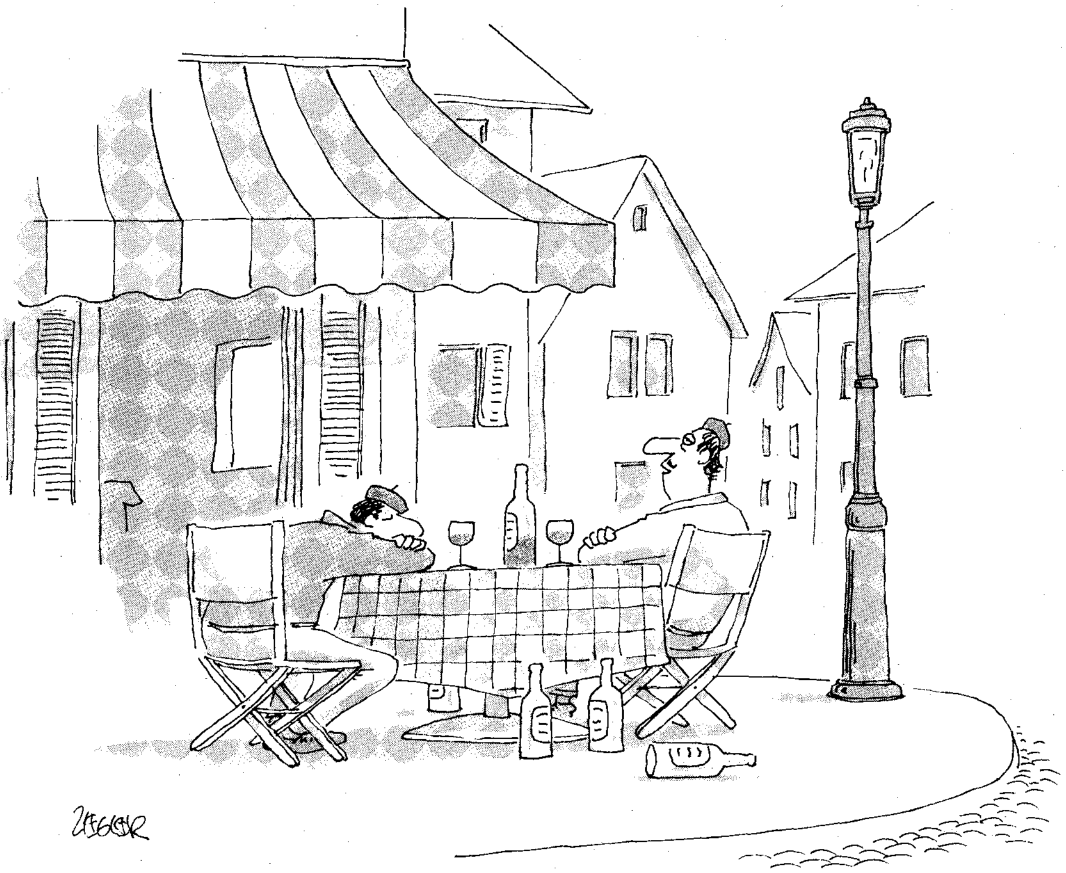
"Tea break," he said. "Mind you, I expect no tea right now, but it's time."

"Am I taking the bread out of your mouth by doing this?" she asked.

"Would it make any difference if I said you were?"

"Robin's all right by himself, you know," Mrs. Henderson said. "He likes reading. He manages better than you think. Manages us, too."

WHEN the windows were finished, Monty worked on the roof. He cut out and replaced rotted timbers, renewed slates, rebuilt the chimney stacks. He was hanging



"It is fun being French, is it not, Henri?"

new gutters one afternoon when a car drew up at the back of Orr Mount and a woman got out. The mossed and weedy gravel was not to her liking; she seemed to set her feet down carefully as she walked round to the other side of the car. The passenger, a girl Robin's age, had already stepped out and stood waiting. She took the woman's arm, and they crossed the runneled surface together, the woman warning the girl when they approached tufts of long grass near the back door of Orr Mount. The woman looked up, and Monty waved to her. She smiled halfheartedly. Monty suspected he had been too familiar.

Not long after they had gone inside, Monty heard a piano being played. The music went on for over an hour. The tunes were familiar, yet somehow the piano sound seemed unusual.

"It never crossed my mind that it was the two of them playing at once," Monty said to Mrs. Henderson when the guests had left and he went in for his tea. "At first I thought it might be the wireless."

"They're not prodigies, you know," she replied. "A lot of blind children learn to play the piano."

"Well, I think it's marvellous. It had a nice swing to it."

Mrs. Henderson did not share his enthusiasm. "Four hands thundering away at a pop song isn't my idea of music," she said. "They're taught to play at school—that was one of the reasons we wanted Robin to go there. I know he plays Mozart and Chopin for his teacher, because I've heard him. But at home all he wants to play is these awful songs he picks up from the radio. Are you musical?"

"No, but I can dance," Monty said. "To play music for dancing is a wonderful thing to be able to do. It's like being able to make people laugh, if you know what I mean."

"Dancing's changed a lot since my day," she said.

"I'm fifteen years out of date," Monty said. "So, thank God, is everyone else in Dryfask—at least of my generation. We have dances at the Community Hall once a month. You should ask Mr. Henderson to take you. You'd enjoy it—everyone's very friendly."

"I don't think so," said Mrs. Henderson. "When you're finished outside, I want you to start on the fireplaces."

"What about the rewiring?"

"No," she said. "The fireplaces."

A look at each room challenged him with how much work he still had to get through. Cardboard boxes stood on the floors among the dust-sheeted furniture in the front rooms, where Mrs. Henderson had already begun stripping wallpaper. Monty watched Robin help her by pulling at a loose flap. The boy looked up with his sightless eyes as he tugged at the layered wallpaper, which peeled vertically and then rose in a drizzle of old plaster.

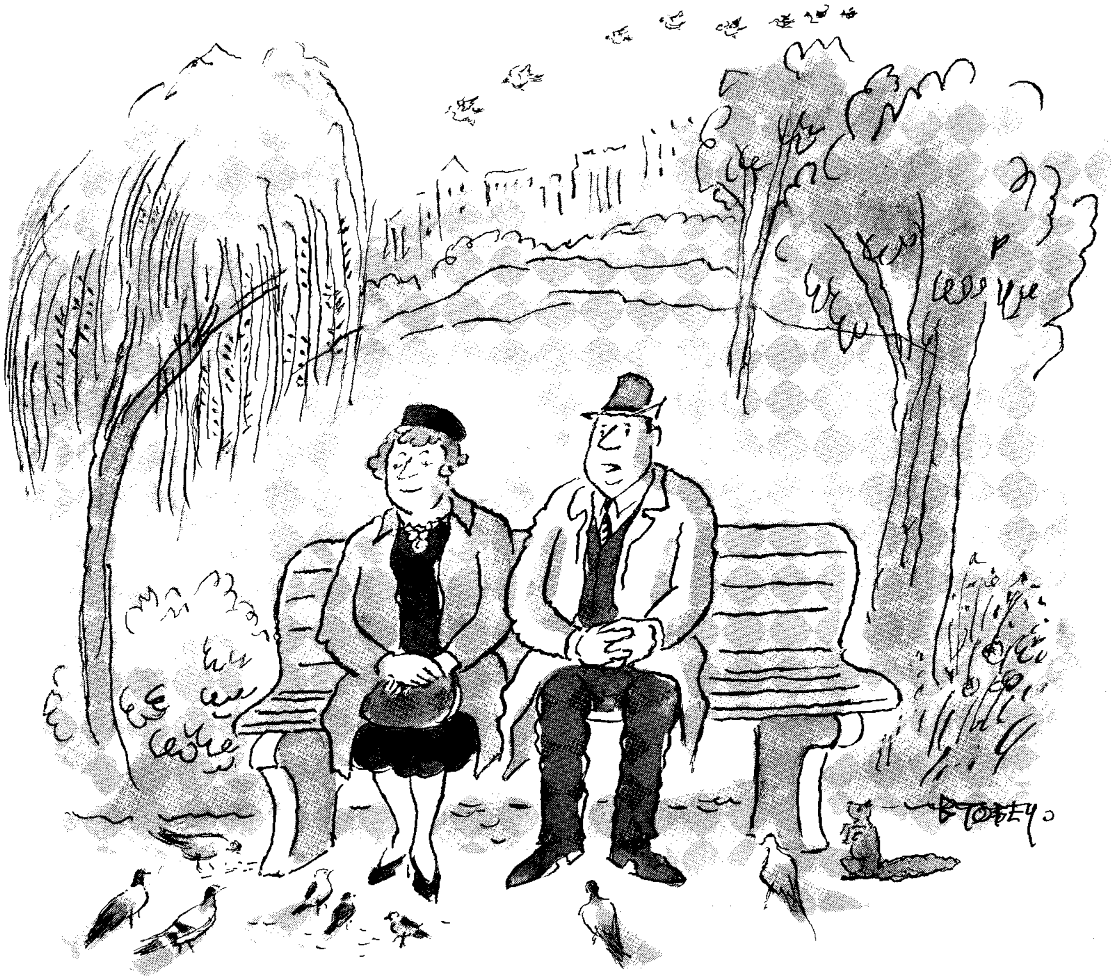
At home, Monty told his wife, "She watches me make good the stone and brickwork in those fireplaces as if she's dying to have a go at that, too! It wouldn't surprise me if she could do it. Talk about organized, Mary! She's got a whole list of what needs doing, at least six pages long, and she's very firm about how she wants it done."

"And that sticks in your craw," Mary said. "You who like to be your own boss."

"I don't understand it. Those old marble mantelpieces were lovely, but she's had me rip them out. 'Careful,' she says. 'I've sold them to an antique dealer.' Old jobs out, and what comes in instead? Older ones! But very nice, Mary. Beautiful old wooden fireplaces, stripped down to the timber, and she says she'll polish them herself. I'll say this for Mrs. Henderson. The woman's got taste."

"She can afford it," Mary said.

"I daresay," Monty said. "Henderson's a civil servant, but he must be pretty high up. Still, if they were that rich, they wouldn't have come down



"I know it's beautiful out here, but what's for supper?"

• •

the market and asked Monty Gault to work for them.”

HENDERSON came home one late afternoon while Robin and the young girl, Gillian, were playing a tune Monty had asked them for. He found Monty humming along as he screwed in a new wall socket.

“Do you think she’s asking for too many outlets?” Henderson said.

“If there’s one thing I’ve learned,” Monty said, “it’s to do what your wife tells me. She’s a very practical woman, and she’s nearly always right.” He consulted his diagram. “Now, if I’ve got this wrong, there’ll be an almighty bang that’ll blow the fuse box off the wall and through the roof.”

Monty’s exaggeration drew Henderson to glance at the diagram, but he pulled back in incomprehension. He looked uneasily at a rugged channel gouged up the wall to lead the wires to the floor above. It looked like a ghastly, irreparable error.

“Personally,” Henderson said, “I felt we should’ve got a proper electrician to do this.”

Monty frowned at him. “I thought those days were over,” he said curtly but confidently, making his remark sound one of sorrow rather than anger.

“As long as you’re sure,” Henderson said.

Monty lay down to winkle a wire under the floorboards. “I know a man who’d do that garden for you,” he said. From his prone position, he saw Henderson’s leg tremble and his heel beat on the floor at twice the tempo of the tune from the piano. Monty got up and roughly began prizing a floorboard loose with a crowbar. Nails sprang free, and the board split.

“Rotten timbers,” he said. “They were ready for the bonfire anyway. This man I know could go through that jungle in no time. Shall I ask him?”

“No,” Henderson said. “The garden’s my responsibility. I’ll get round to it.”

“Suit yourself,” Monty said. “It was just an idea.”

“I wish they’d play something else,” Henderson said. “Four hands on a piano just rams home the mistakes. It gets on my nerves.”

“I like it,” Monty said. “They’re playing it for me. Your boy’s as bright as a button, and he and Gillian make a good team.”

“They’re very close,” Henderson said impulsively. “We find it worrying. Gillian’s his only friend, you see. And she’s as blind as he is.”

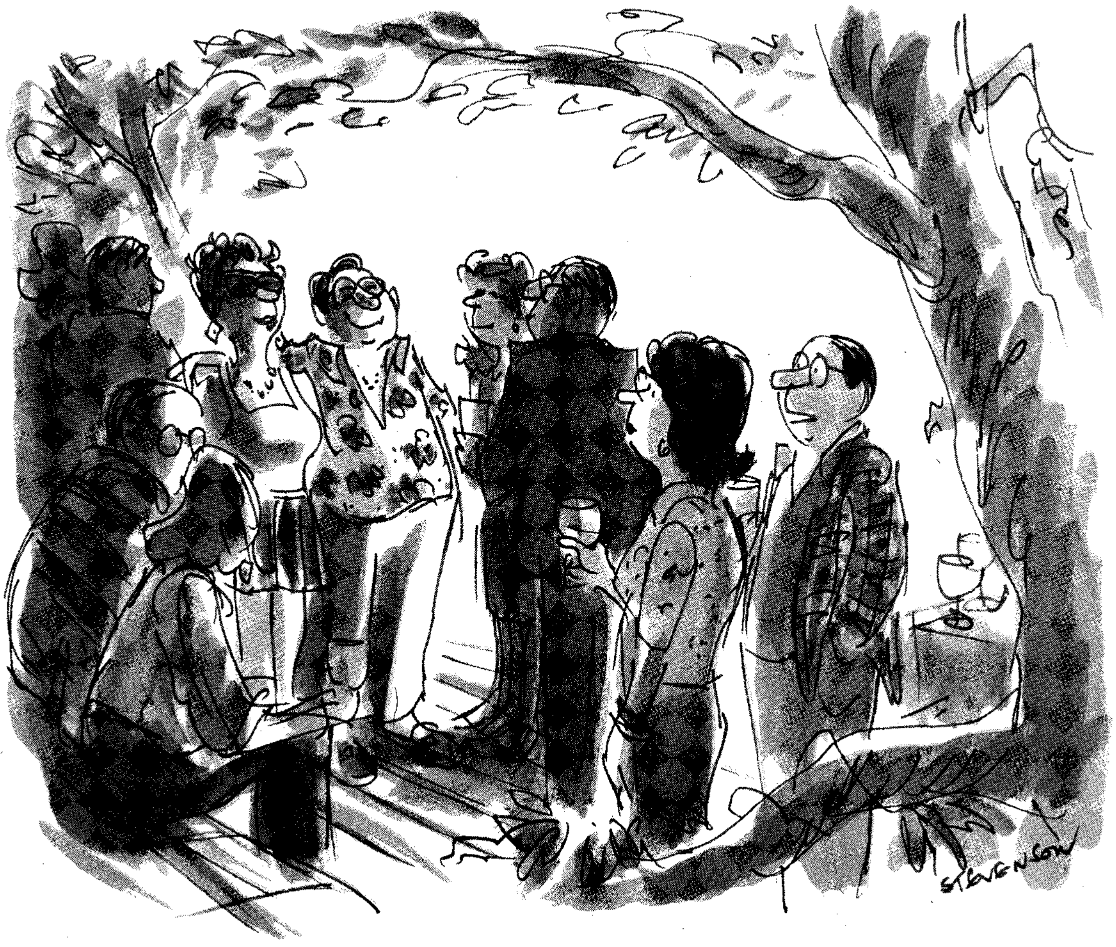
Puzzled, Monty put his weight on the crowbar, and another floorboard creaked upward with a *ping* of nails and the destructive noise of wood tearing. “But the two of them get on fine,” he said.

“Of course, we can’t really discourage them,” Henderson said. “It’s just a bit upsetting that they’re so inseparable. The Boswells feel the same about Gillian. When you’re bringing up a child who’s blind, you’re thinking about the future all the time. It’s not easy for a boy like Robin to make friends with sighted children.”

RICH summer growth made more conspicuous than ever the tumbling, nettled, indiscriminate verdure of the garden at Orr Mount. Monty was dismayed. In Dryfask, unkempt gardens and shabby houses were taken as signs of the demoralization of their owners—symptoms of what was known locally as “falling out with yourself.” Two months of mild evenings had passed, he reflected, in which Henderson could have made a start against the years of neglect. Nor had he laid a hand on the house.

“Paint-stripping coming on well, I see,” Monty said to Henderson, in the sly hope of shaming him. “Slowly but surely. It’s a heartbreaking job your wife’s taken on there.” Days and days of Mrs. Henderson’s fastidious work with a scraping knife and a noxious-smelling chemical had turned out to be in vain, for the bottom inch of the baseboard moldings on the ground floor was revealed to be damp and rotten under the layers of paint and varnish. It was like watching an archeologist.

“But we’re getting there,” Henderson said.



“They’re not just an awful couple. Each of them is awful in his or her own right.”

“There’s light at the end of the tunnel.”

“As they say, it’s very often the lamp on an oncoming train,” Monty said.

Henderson’s worried uselessness bothered Monty. It was bred into Monty’s bones that a man should neither be so lazy nor feel himself so superior as to shy away from turning a hand on his own property. Still, he thought,

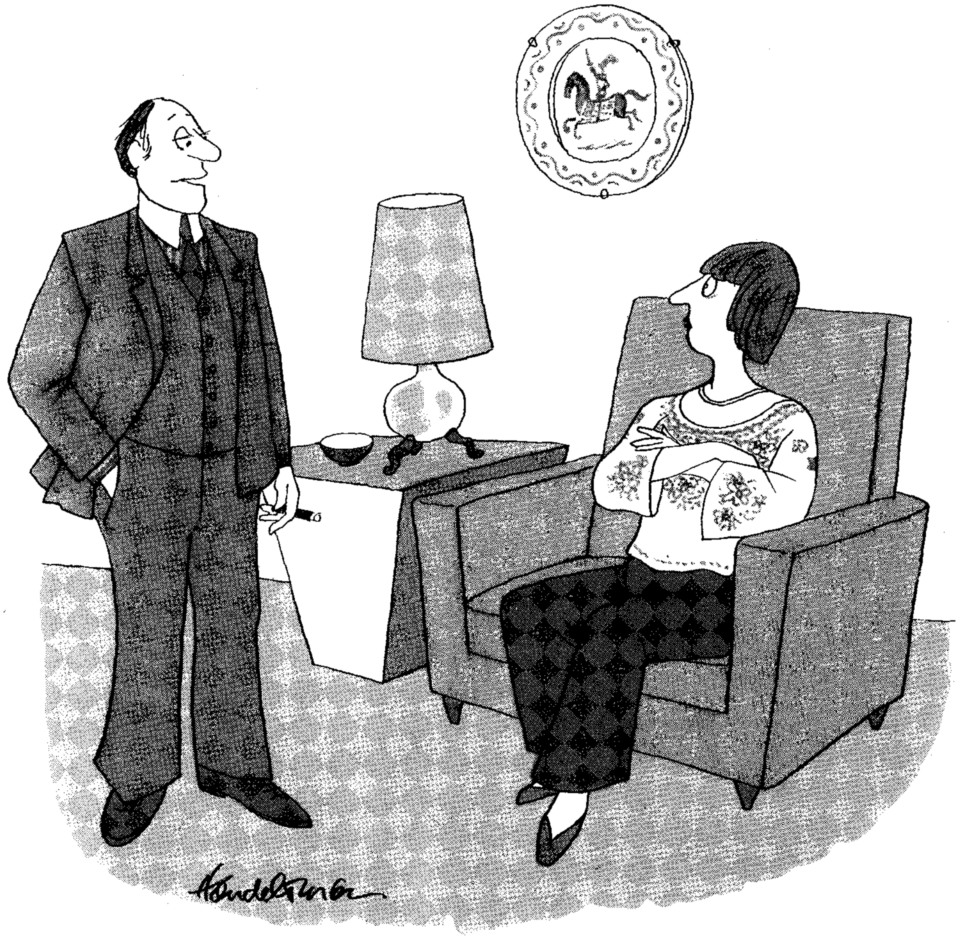
It is the business of the wealthy man
To give employment to the artisan.

Work was getting harder to find. The longer the Orr Mount renovations lasted, the better it was for him. He hoped, too, that his performance in these substantial repairs might lead Henderson to offer him the lighter job of painting and decorating.

But when Monty saw Mrs. Henderson tackle the tousled and thorny wilderness around Orr Mount he felt guilty at hoping for more work through Henderson’s laziness or ineptitude. Mrs. Henderson stooped down and snipped savagely at the rugged grass with a pair of garden shears. Monty turned away from the window with contempt for her husband’s handlessness. The click of the shears slowed and then jammed altogether on a resistant divot. He could imagine the strain in the woman’s arms, the impossible task of driving through those matted tufts with mere heavy-duty shears. What was called for was a strong man with a scythe, or something mechanical. Better still, the lumpy, repulsive meadow that the lawn had become ought to be dug up and re-turfed.

Monty continued with his plastering, expecting at any moment to witness Mrs. Henderson give up in despair. But each time he looked out of the window she was shearing as vigorously as ever, and getting nowhere. He watched as her elbows shot up at each side with the action of her gigantic scissoring. Her arched back rose and fell with the effort.

After almost an hour, Monty could bear it no longer, and he went out to her. “Honest, Mrs. Henderson, if you want to do that, you should get the right tools for the job.” Smeared with wet grass and mud, the blades of her shears ripped viciously at a heavy tuft. “You’ll be at it this time next year,” he said, trying to make a joke of it. “You’d as well gnaw at it with your teeth as pluck and pull with that. You’ll never do it.”



“You think I’m dishonest? My brother Tom is a hell of a lot more dishonest than I am.”

• •

She turned round and looked up at him. Her face was flushed with effort, and the strain of her labor, and her thoughts had made her face hard-favored and bitter. Her cheeks ran with tears. She stood up breathlessly, wiped her face on her sleeve, and threw the shears to the ground.

“Many’s the man who’d look at that mess and run a mile before he’d work a spade on it,” Monty said. “Mrs. Henderson, there’s a pal of mine who’d transform it in a week. It’d save you both a lot of trouble.” His tone suggested he understood that the garden controversy expressed some profound matrimonial obstacle between the Hendersons. “Would you like me to ask him to come by?”

“No, I would *not!*” she said angrily. “How dare you interfere? I know who’ll do this garden, and it won’t be your friend.”

It was clear that Mrs. Henderson’s anger and her tears were not those of weakness or self-pity but of determination. Embarrassed and apologetic, Monty knew better than to try to console her. When she walked away, he left it at that and went back to work.

Nor did he mention Mrs. Henderson’s tearful and violent gardening to Mary. Still, he couldn’t help complaining to her about Henderson. “He’s spending money hand over fist on the house, I’m working miracles inside, and outdoors it’s like an Amazonian nature reserve. God knows what wild beasts are roaming through that undergrowth.”

“I don’t see why they don’t get a man to do the garden,” Mary said.

“Actually,” Monty said, “if I got the painting and decorating I wouldn’t mind doing the garden myself. It’d finish the work nicely. I’d get a real kick out of that.”

“I don’t care what you do,” Mary said, “so long as it means steady money. I’m getting used to being able to pay the bills.”

“I’D like your advice,” Henderson said to Monty a few weeks later. The contracted work was nearly done. “I want the kitchen floor laid with quarry tile. Can you recommend a reliable tiler?"

"How about me?"

"Can you? Surely you haven't had much *experience* of tiling?"

"Have I let you down yet?"

"To tell you the truth," Henderson said, "I'm looking for someone to do the decorating." It sounded close to the offer Monty had hoped for, but he waited to be asked directly. "I told Mrs. Henderson I wasn't sure if it was quite your line of country."

"Are you asking me?" Monty said.

"It's too much for us to manage on our own, what with me at work . . ." Henderson said lamely.

"I can do it," Monty said.

Mrs. Henderson's excitement and satisfaction at the progress made on her house, and the faint sound of the piano downstairs when Robin was allowed to play, made Orr Mount a happier house than Monty had known it. It was as if the incident in the garden had never happened, that animal clack of shears and furious tearing of grass. There was no forgetting it, though, or the fact of the garden, with its vegetation as energetic as ever. Very soon, Monty thought, the Hendersons would be sleeping in a bedroom that was in mint condition. But when they got up in the morning and drew the curtains, the lively, wicked overgrowth—all that strangled greenery, dripping with dew—would stare at them in challenge.

Henderson, too, was in a better frame of mind. He came home early one day. "I collected the curtains," he said proudly.

Monty helped him unload, and Mrs. Henderson set off toward the back door with her arms laden with fabric. "Where did you put the rods?" he asked Henderson.

"I couldn't get them into the car," Henderson said, apparently unaware of the importance of his omission. "They're long things."

"Your wife'll be furious! She's dying to get these up. The rods are plastic—you could've bent them."

"Some of them are wooden poles," Henderson said stubbornly.

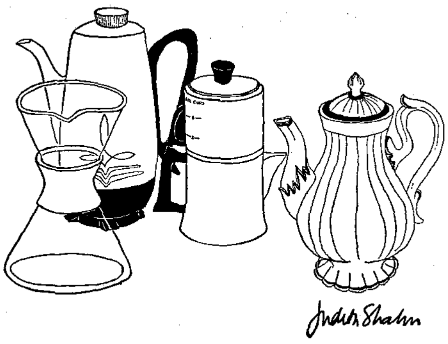
"We could've done without the poles, for the moment—they're for the sitting room. But we need the rods *now.*" Monty was openly exasperated. "Look, I'll go and get them. Where's the receipt?"

Henderson fished a piece of paper from his wallet in silence. He was clearly offended at Monty's tone as he went on. "You've got a roof rack there, Mr. Henderson. You could've tied the rods onto that if you didn't want to bend them. You don't *think!*" Monty got into his van, leaving Henderson expostulating quietly.

When Monty got back with the rods an hour later, Mrs. Henderson was cooking dinner.

"I know it's late," she said, "but do you think you could put these up in the bedroom?" It was a cold and formal request, without a hint of thanks in her voice.

"Never mind," he said to himself as he sat on the window ledge upstairs, forcing the hooks through slots in the curtain tape. "So long as we keep the peace."



It was already dark when he got into his van. He looked up and saw Mrs. Henderson pulling the curtains shut, then opening and closing them again. She did this several times. It was now a better window than the one at which he had first seen her, he reflected.

Sitting down to his own dinner, Monty told Mary, "I know I'm far from perfect—"

"You can say that again. What time do you call this to come home, without so much as giving me a ring to warn me?"

"—but you wouldn't last ten minutes with that man Henderson. Now, *there's* an imperfect man for you," Monty said.

"At least," Mary said, "he's got money, and he gets home at a decent hour."

"The story of my life," Monty said. "I oblige folk by staying a bit later to

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SUMMERFALL

After "the glorious Fourth," summer tumbles down.
An old hotel in Salt Lake City, Newhouse its name—
methodically installed with plugs of dynamite

for time-release explosion—burst!
Stupendously slow, the upper stories first. So
the whole west side of summer shears away.

Leafy cornices and balconies shatter, whirl down,
reduce to particles. The smash accelerates
as autumn's avalanches slide in planned relay,

until blanked out behind gray towers of fog.
All will be flattened. Graciousness, out of date,
must go, in instantaneous shock.

But Mind projects it slow,
stretching movement out, each flung chunk floating
awhile, weightless, and with no noise.

Mind reluctantly unbuilds summer.
The four-square, shade-roofed mansions
of an early, honest, work-proud era fall

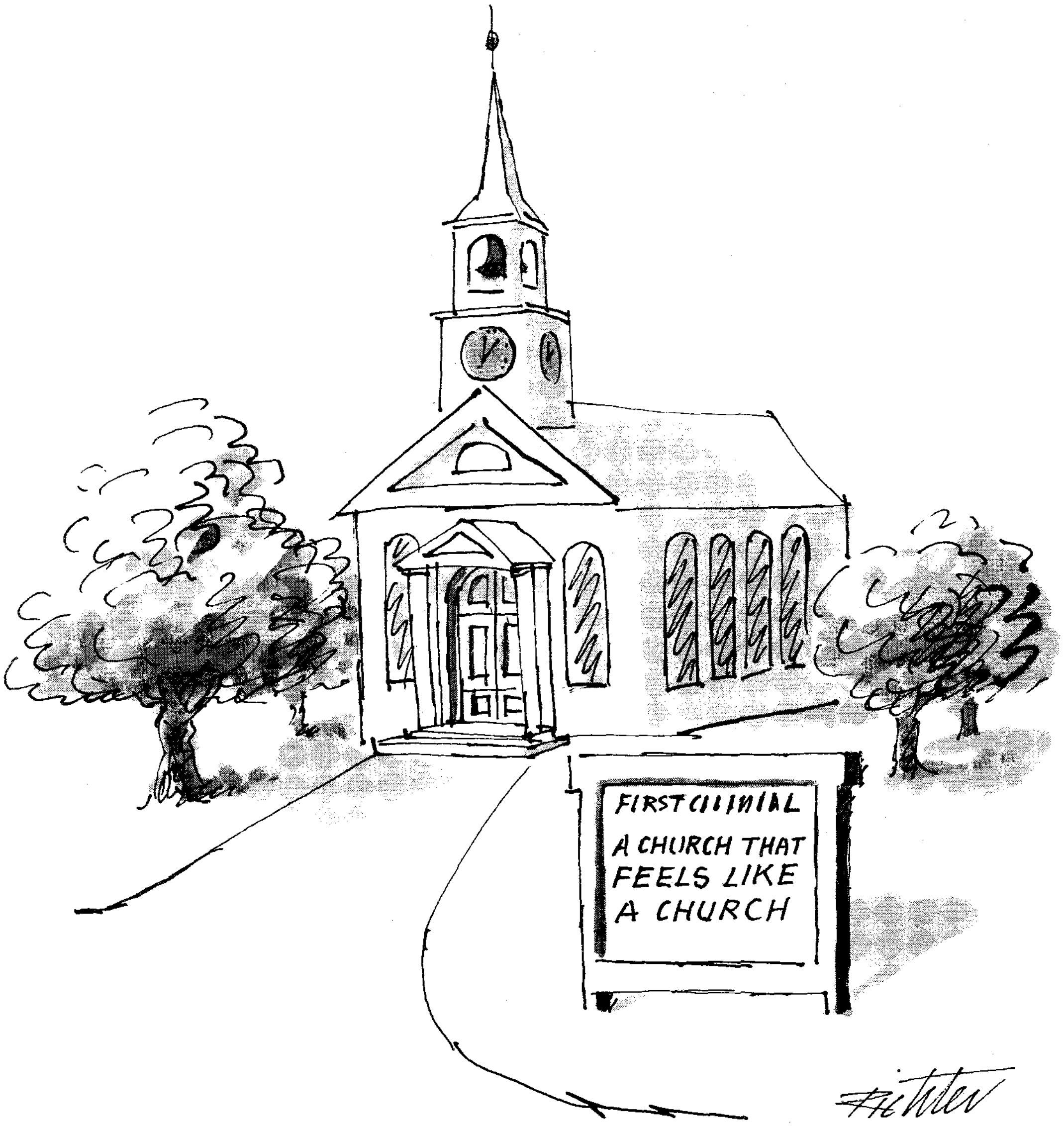
to the dust of demolition. Prompt to come, ye Saints,
your condominiums, high-rise business, boosted
economy, new cash flow.

After "the rockets' red glare," here on the eastern shore
a sick acrylic sunset loiters in murky haze.
The sequence of such evenings will be speeding up.

—MAY SWENSON

• •

get a job finished, and when I get back here I'm nagged for it. Mary, I'm a handyman. It's my business to be obliging. Will you never understand that?"


FIRST COLONIAL
A CHURCH THAT FEELS LIKE A CHURCH
Richter

WHEN it came the turn of the sitting room at Orr Mount, Mrs. Henderson helped Monty move the furniture into the hall—everything except the piano. "No, it's too heavy to move," she said. "It would block the hall. Leave it in the middle and cover it with a tarpaulin. Frankly," she said, "I'd as soon see the back of it."

Monty glanced at her in surprise, but she was looking elsewhere. "It takes up a lot of room in this house, one way and another," she said.

It was near the end of the school holidays. Robin sat in his room upstairs or at the kitchen table, where he read, his fingers feeling over the sheets of text, his head turned thoughtfully to one side.

The boy missed playing his piano. His mother was in town ordering furniture, and he came into the sitting room where Monty stood on a stepladder, painting the cornices in deep concentration. Robin reached under the tarpaulin and played a loud chord.

"You gave me a fright, Robin!" Monty cried.

"Will you be finished in this room soon?" the boy asked.

"Give it three or four days," Monty said. "I'll be as quick as I can. I miss the sound of your music. But your mother told you to stay in the kitchen. If she catches you in here, there'll be trouble."

Robin ran his fingers over the keyboard. "Do you know where the wireless is?" he asked.

"Isn't it in the kitchen?"

"I can't find it," the boy said.

"Come and I'll help you look for it." Monty climbed down and put his hand on Robin's shoulder, meaning to guide him, but the boy led the way.

The radio was on a shelf too high up for Robin to have reached. Monty wondered why Mrs. Henderson had put it up there when she knew that Robin liked to listen to it.

"Where was it?" Robin asked.

"It was on the chest in a corner," Monty said, hoping to deceive him. "There were things in front of it."

"What things?"

"Cornflakes, washing powder," Monty said, improvising an answer from packets he saw elsewhere in the kitchen.

Robin walked across the kitchen and put his hand on the packet of cornflakes. He lifted the packet and shook it. "You reached up," Robin said. "Was it up there?"

"Are you supposed to be studying?" Monty asked.

"She hid it. She didn't want me to find it," he said.

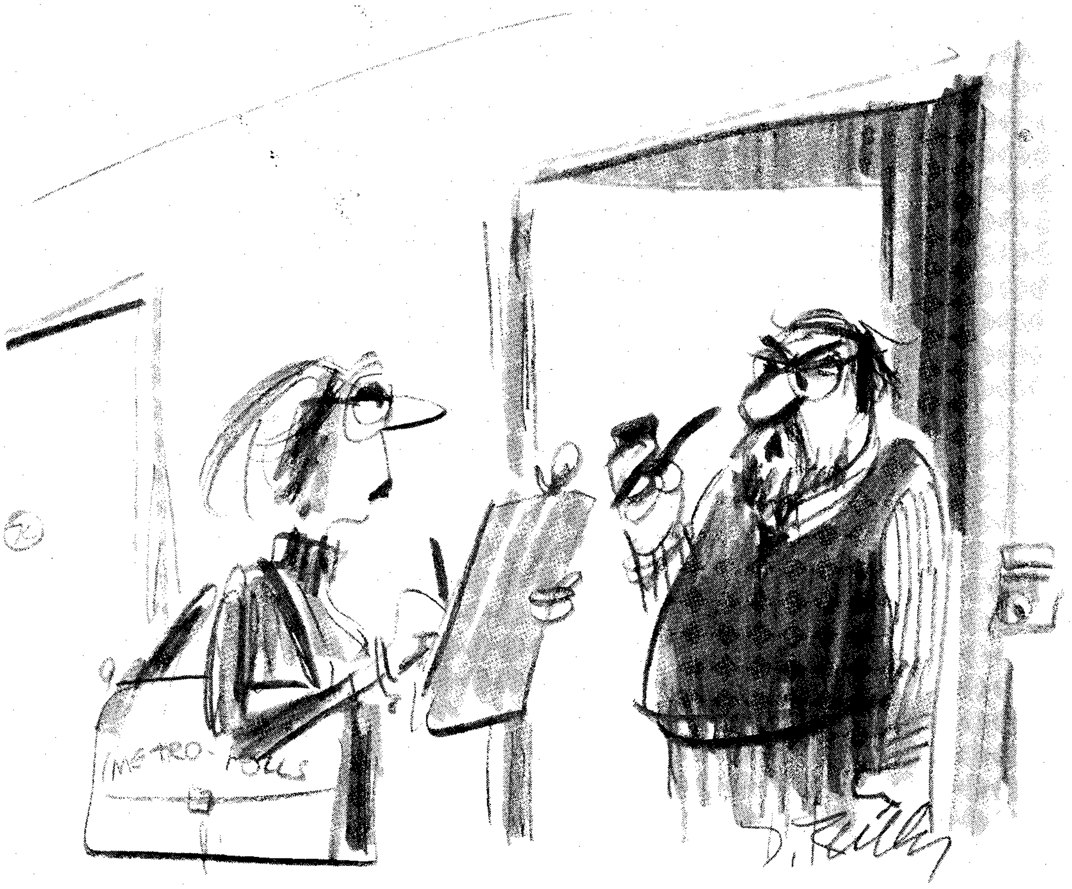
"Then if your mother doesn't want you to have the wireless, maybe I shouldn't give it to you. She must have a reason," Monty said.

"You can say you didn't know I wasn't to have it," Robin said.

A NEW bathroom was installed, and Monty's last job was tiling and painting it.

"Unless we've missed something," he said to Mrs. Henderson as he washed up, "I think that's it."

They walked into the sitting room and she gave him a glass of sherry. "I won't sit down in these overalls," Monty said, conscious also of his working shoes on the Persian rug. He put his glass down and stepped off the carpet, kneeling to run his hand over the mellow glow he had succeeded in



"I don't give opinions, I shape opinions."

bringing out on the old parquet floor. "I knew this floor had life left in it," he said. "It's come up a treat. It must have been hidden under those old carpets and underlays for years, just waiting for someone like you, Mrs. Henderson—an appreciative owner who'll take good care of it."

"There are one or two lumpy bits," Mrs. Henderson said. "Otherwise I'm very pleased with it."

Pictures now hung on the sitting-room walls. Rugs and chintzes brought a bright, complacent richness to the large room. There were books in the bookcases, and ornaments had come forth from the tea chests and boxes that had once littered the unkempt interior.

"This room has class," Monty said. "I like it. It has taste." He waved his arm in a survey of the sitting room. "I've done the heavy work, but I can see now what you had in mind all along. I must say, though, that it's a pity, a great pity, about the garden." He smiled cautiously. "I don't want to interfere, Mrs. Henderson, but I've a living to earn. I'm making you an offer."

Robin ran into the room, leading Gillian by the hand. "My mother will be back for me at five. Is it all right?" Gillian said.

Eagerly, Robin asked, "May we please play the piano for a bit?"

"No, you may not," Mrs. Henderson said. "I'm speaking to Mr. Gault."

"Don't stop them on my account," Monty said.

"Please, Mummy!" Robin said, put out by the delay.

"Go ahead then!" Mrs. Henderson said angrily. She turned back to Monty. "You *are* interfering," she told him quietly. "I'm sure you mean well, but the garden's not for you to do. No longer than fifteen minutes!" she shouted crossly to Robin, who made no acknowledgment. "Did you hear me? Robin! Fifteen minutes and no more!"

"I'm sorry," Monty said. "I knew it rankled, but I thought maybe I'd be helping you out. And helping me out, too," he added. "I don't deny it."

"I'll send my husband over with the money he owes you," she said.

"It's not for me to talk about what's wrong here," he said. "But you're not trying, Mrs. Henderson, and neither's he. You're making a big mistake. I wish you all joy of your house. Take care of it. There's twenty years of my hard-earned experience in the work I've put into it. And it would've pleased *me* to see it finished."

Four young hands ventured on the first bars of a tune. As Monty left the house, he heard Mrs. Henderson shout, "Will you shut up that racket!"

Driving off, Monty saw Henderson's car approaching his own van on the narrow lane that led to the Dryfask road. He stopped in the middle of the lane, so that Henderson had to stop, too. He got out of the van and walked to Henderson's lowered window.

"You've the swankiest house in Dryfask, and the nastiest garden I ever saw. That won't be gardening; it'll be pioneering. You've got pixies in your orchard!" he shouted, exasperated, as Henderson stared at him incredulously. "Do yourself a favor, Henderson. Get it done, and fast! Get it done before it's too late!" He started to return to his van but stopped and went back to Henderson. "I'm talking about your garden. Can you wield a scythe? You'll have to learn!"

Henderson leaned on his horn. It was an angry, demented noise that howled over the countryside. Once back in his van, Monty Gault retaliated, and pressed on his. Their vehicles were almost nose to nose before Monty swerved and pulled up beside Henderson. "If you need me," he shouted, "you know where to find me!"

—Douglas Dunn

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"When people come to work here, I ask them two things: Number one, please help us make the best truck in North America so we can be around a while. Number two, please make this a good place to work," Kieltyka says. He adds, "We can't take a long wolf. He just won't fit."—*Washington Post.*

What if he agrees to be shortened?

A TRINIDAD CHILDHOOD

BEYOND THE DRAGON'S MOUTH

I RECALL a fine summer afternoon, soft and blue and unportentous. It was my second year at Oxford, 1966: a year when skirts were extravagantly short; when it was fashionable for men to grow their hair long and affect a disdain for material comforts; when it was almost compulsory to smoke marijuana (or pretend that you did), to find common reality "weird," and to show concern about the war in Vietnam; when adventurous youth was convinced it possessed a wisdom surpassing all previous wisdoms. The best of times and the worst of times. I see myself, slim, stoop-shouldered, walking back to my rooms in college, having just been released from another unremarkable tutorial session. My feeble attempts to stitch together a point of view on the use of the inductive method in the construction of scientific hypotheses had made no perceptible impression on my tutor and had left me feeling a little jaded. Strolling along St. Giles, I was neither happy nor sad. I may have been thinking how pleasant it would be to get hold of a punt, to spend an hour or two on the river.

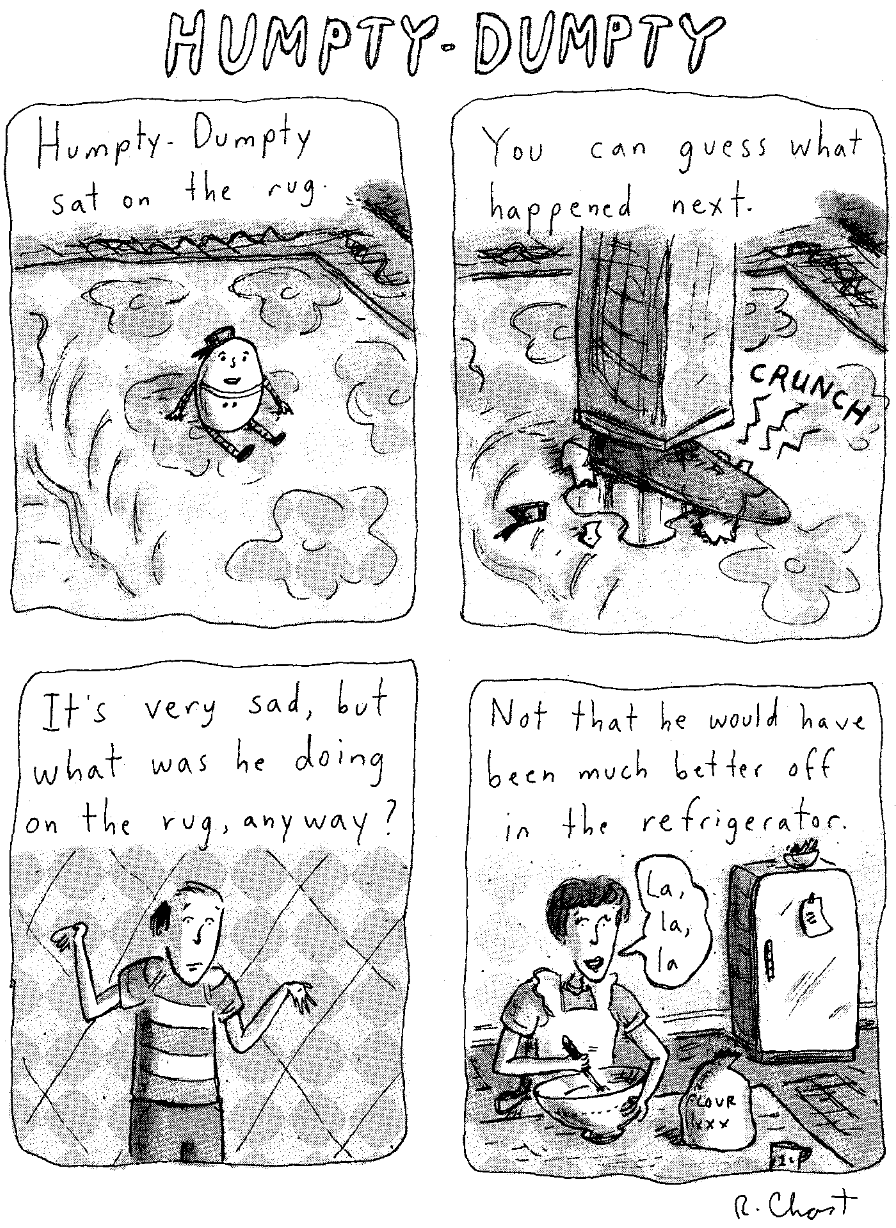
Approaching Broad Street, I suddenly became aware that something peculiar was happening to me. Inexplicably, my heart had started to race, my palms to moisten with sweat, my head to swim. I realized I was terribly afraid. But afraid of what? What was there to be so afraid of on this soft blue afternoon? Dazed, barely able to maintain my balance, barely able to breathe, I huddled against the wall of Balliol. The summer sky, so benign, so unthreatening, was transformed into a wheeling amphitheatre of undefined menace—a maelstrom of annihilating vacuity. As I stared at it, wave upon wave of raw fear swept through me. I imagined myself a body: a nameless corpse to be picked up from the street. It was as if all the secret terrors accumulated from birth had broken loose and come upon me in one overwhelming, retributive flood. How long I remained huddled against that wall I cannot say. Maybe no more than a minute or two.

The worst of the panic receded. In its place came exhaustion—a sensation of such utter weariness and debilitation that for an interval I could do nothing at all, lacking even the small amount of strength required to lift my arms and dry my sweat-soaked forehead. Shoulders hunched, I remained half collapsed against the wall, staring at the passersby, who—although they moved close enough for me to touch them, although I could hear the soft snatches of their laughter and talk—seemed remote and enigmatic creatures, holographic projections from an external world that had lost its solidity. When some semblance of strength was restored to my muscles, I made my way to a nearby pub and swiftly, unthinkingly, drank three pints of beer. I returned to my room, stretched myself out in front of the electric fire, and, stupefied by the beer, went to sleep.

All the same, that night I found myself wide awake in the small hours, staring blankly into the darkness. For the first time, I properly understood the meaning of the word "desolation;" for the first time I felt myself to be entirely alone and helpless. Lying there, I noted with a start of dread the creeping onset of a fresh rush of the terror that had already become my familiar. It was too much for me. Throwing on my dressing gown, I fled from the room out into the empty quad and hammered on a friend's door. I cannot imagine what he must have made of the trembling apparition standing on his threshold. "I think I'm dying," I said to him—or words to that effect. "You must help me. I'm dying." He reacted with commendable calm to the news. He made tea, and we talked (what could we have talked about?) until the sky began to lighten. With the coming of the day, my agitation waned and I became gradually less afraid.

The calamity that had befallen me—at first sight so gratuitous an assault—was, I quickly realized, linked to an

"And you can skip the amenities. This is a power lunch."


HUMPTY-DUMPTY
Humpty-Dumpty sat on the rug.
You can guess what happened next.
CRUNCH
It's very sad, but what was he doing on the rug, anyway?
Not that he would have been much better off in the refrigerator.
La, la, la
FLOUR XXX
R. Chast

event I had tried to banish from my consciousness. Earlier that summer, I had had a bad shock. Just before the start of the term, a friend of mine, a fellow-student from Trinidad, had been found dead in his rooms at Balliol. We had known each other from early adolescence, gone to the same secondary school, studied the same subjects. But to explain the impact his death had on me it is necessary for me to talk a little about Steve, to compare him with myself. Although we were roughly the same age, Steve had always seemed significantly older and wiser. He exuded a maturity—a dependability and sureness of purpose—that I could not command. In part, this must have been the result of his Presbyterian upbringing. (His family's Indian ancestry had somehow been almost completely effaced by their conversion to Christianity: I never thought of Steve as an Indian.) Presbyterianism seemed to inculcate a special piety and discipline in its adherents, an uprightness of mind and body alien to the quasi-Hindu formlessness in which I was reared. Presbyterian households were stamped with a distinct family resemblance. There comes back to me the sheen of varnish, the smell of polished floors, the upright pianos arrayed with framed family photographs, the bringing forth, on trays, of glasses of iced soft drinks, and the passing round, on dainty plates, of slices of sponge cake to be nervously dissected and speared with tiny forks. Pale-faced Presbyterian girls, accomplished in the gentle arts of music, embroidery, and cooking, became wonderful wives. Droves of Hindus went to the bad. Muslims went to the bad. Catholics and Anglicans went to the bad. Presbyterians—so it appeared to me—never did, moving through life with an uncanny assurance and precision.

Steve was a true child of this milieu, an exemplar of all its virtues. As befitted his air of maturity, he was the first of my contemporaries to graduate to long trousers. Not content with joining the Sea Scouts (briefly, unhappily, I, too, joined that organization), Steve also became a member of our school's Cadet Corps. Idling about the playing field, I would sometimes watch him marching in his starched khaki uniform up and down the asphalt tennis courts, a rifle aslant on his shoulder. I was not alone in thinking these late-afternoon maneuverings an amusing and faintly ridiculous spectacle. But Steve in his military aspect was not to be trifled with. Once, my mockery slipping out of bounds, he marched stiffly toward me with his rifle, bawled me out, and half threatened to report me to the headmaster if I persisted. After that, I behaved myself. Making fun of the Cadet Corps—and, by implication, the British Empire—was a serious charge. It was not too difficult to imagine the wrath that would be called down upon me. Our headmaster was English and a fierce and resolute chastiser of the wicked. It was taken for granted by the rest of us that Steve would one day be made head prefect, and in due course he was. Disappointingly, I was not even considered for the lower ranks of that august hierarchy. Someone (not Steve) muttered something about my lack of a sense of responsibility. My one consolation was that Steve was not as "bright" as I was. *Cold comfort!* Because, despite my possession of this nebulous attribute, his future seemed assured in a way that mine clearly wasn't. Steve, there could be no doubt, would get the kind of results required for university admission and would make untroubled progress toward a good degree in a sensible, marketable qualification. It was assumed that eventually he would rise to the top of some suitably exalted bureaucracy, become a man of power and influence, and, in the ripeness of time, be rewarded with a knighthood or some barely less worthy honor. He was mantled in an air of inevitability.

His attitude toward me was nearly always tolerant, touched with a scarcely perceptible trace of paternal indulgence. If he occasionally seemed ridiculous to me, I, too, on occasion must have seemed more than a little ridiculous to him. When, for example, I proclaimed myself an atheist (this

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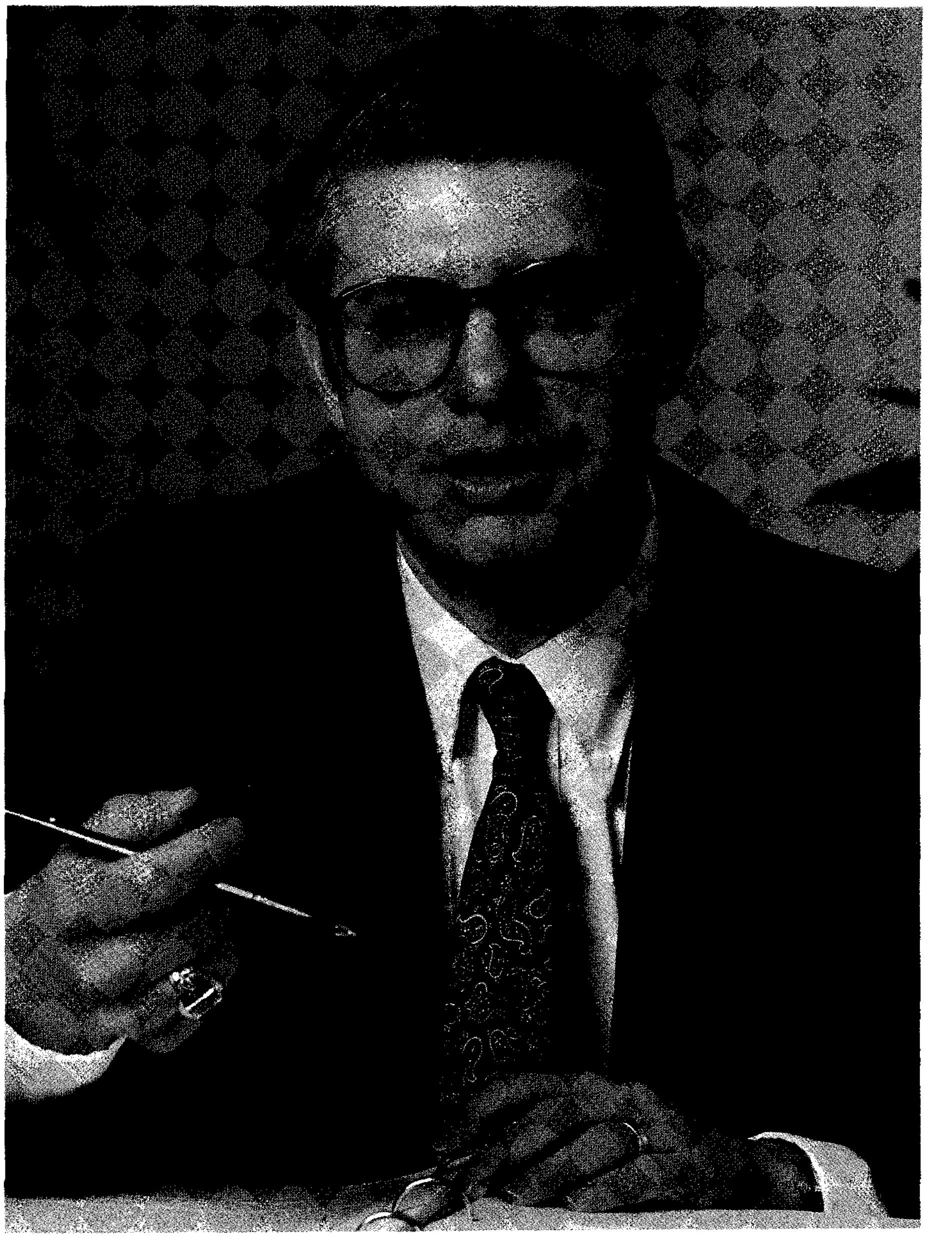

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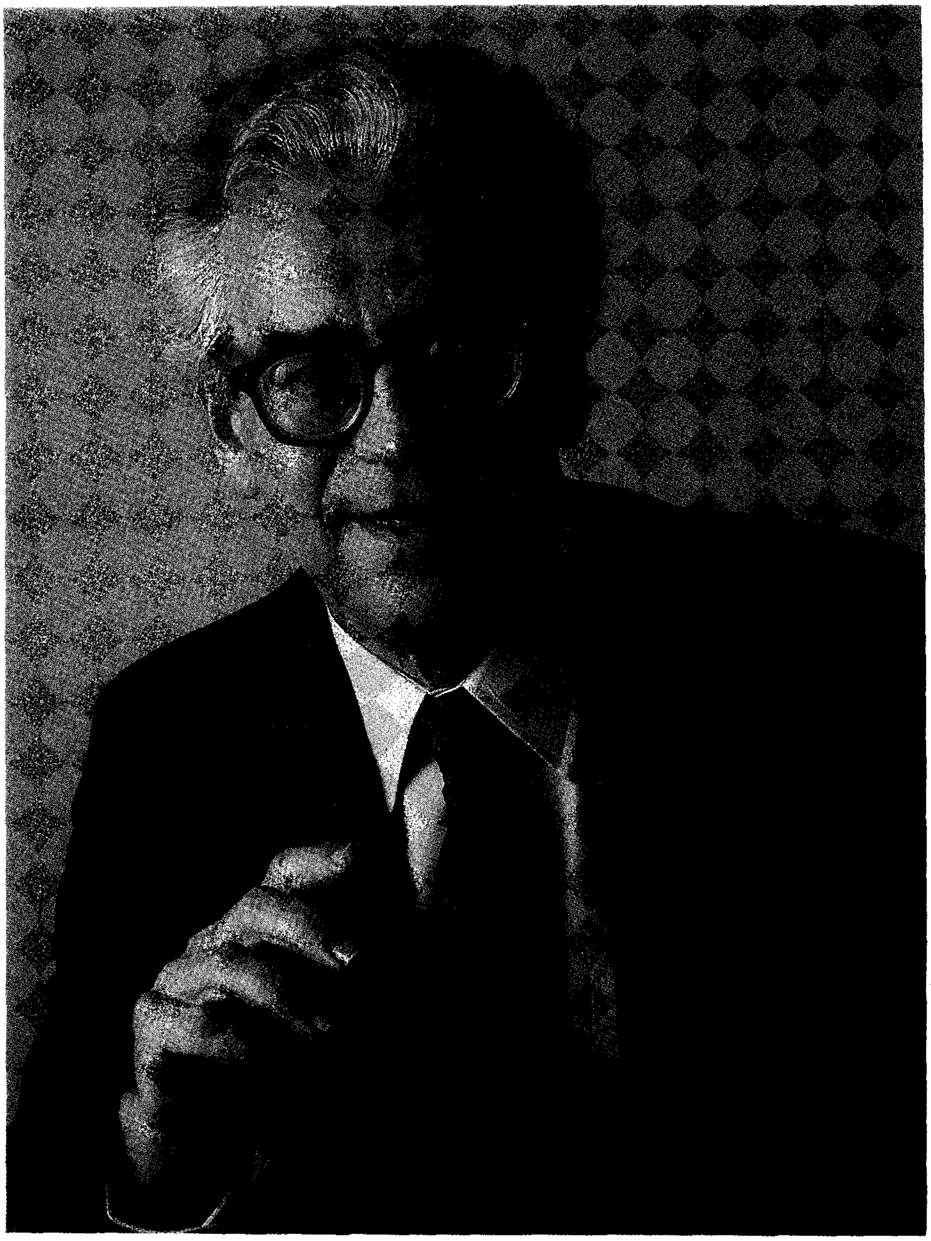

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was in response to the crusading zeal of the Jehovah's Witness in our class), Steve merely smiled and refused to be drawn. Generally, he distanced himself from the ferment of sixth-form disputation: there cannot have been a better head prefect. Not even the Jehovah's Witness—obsessed by his creed's hostility toward Darwinism—could provoke him into argument. I, on the other hand, allowed myself to be considerably provoked and, as a consequence, blundered into absurdity.

We both did well in the A-Level examinations, and we both got into Oxford—I on an Open Scholarship, which left me free to do as I pleased; Steve (I believe) on a more restrictive Development Scholarship, which would have obliged him to return to Trinidad and work for the government. He elected to read Philosophy (for which he had no head), Politics, and Economics (for both of which he had considerable head). I, with my usual perversity, opted for the more dubious realms of Philosophy, Psychology, and Physiology, knowing a little about the first and nothing at all about the second and third elements of that strange trinity. At Oxford, we went, to some extent, our separate ways. Steve was a devotee of Union debates, a joiner of societies. I was eager to put Trinidad behind me, to steep myself in unfamiliar excitements. As a result, though we were on the most amiable terms, our friendship during that period was not all it might have been. Once a fortnight or so, I might go to his rooms. He was unfailingly welcoming and would offer tea and toast and other nutritious things. More rarely, he would come to my room—it was never as pleasant and well-ordered a place as his was, and the food cupboard was nearly always bare. My hair was gradually lengthening, my credit account at Blackwell's bookshop was gradually getting out of hand (increasingly impolite reminders were landing in my pigeonhole), I was gradually discovering I had neither aptitude nor taste for what passed for psychology at Oxford. Steve, so far as I knew, was untroubled by the kind of anxieties gathering about me. He remained fastidiously barbered and well dressed; he looked forward contentedly to harvesting a decent Second at the end of his three years and to returning home. I was losing any vision I might once have had of the future and was drifting through an often alluring but chaotic present, which promised to lead nowhere in particular. It is possible that a creeping uneasiness about myself made me avoid him. And yet, while we never talked of such matters, he was a consoling presence: a dependable point of reference and a link with the past—a past fast rushing away from me.

Then, with brutal suddenness, there he was: a corpse huddled on a bed, a body that had had to wait a day or two to be discovered. (He had had a bad cold, had perhaps swallowed too many aspirins, vomited in his sleep, choked, and died.) I remember I was walking along the High Street when I heard my name shouted from the opposite side. Turning, I recognized one of Steve's friends. I waved and walked on.

"Haven't you heard?" he shouted across the roar of the traffic.

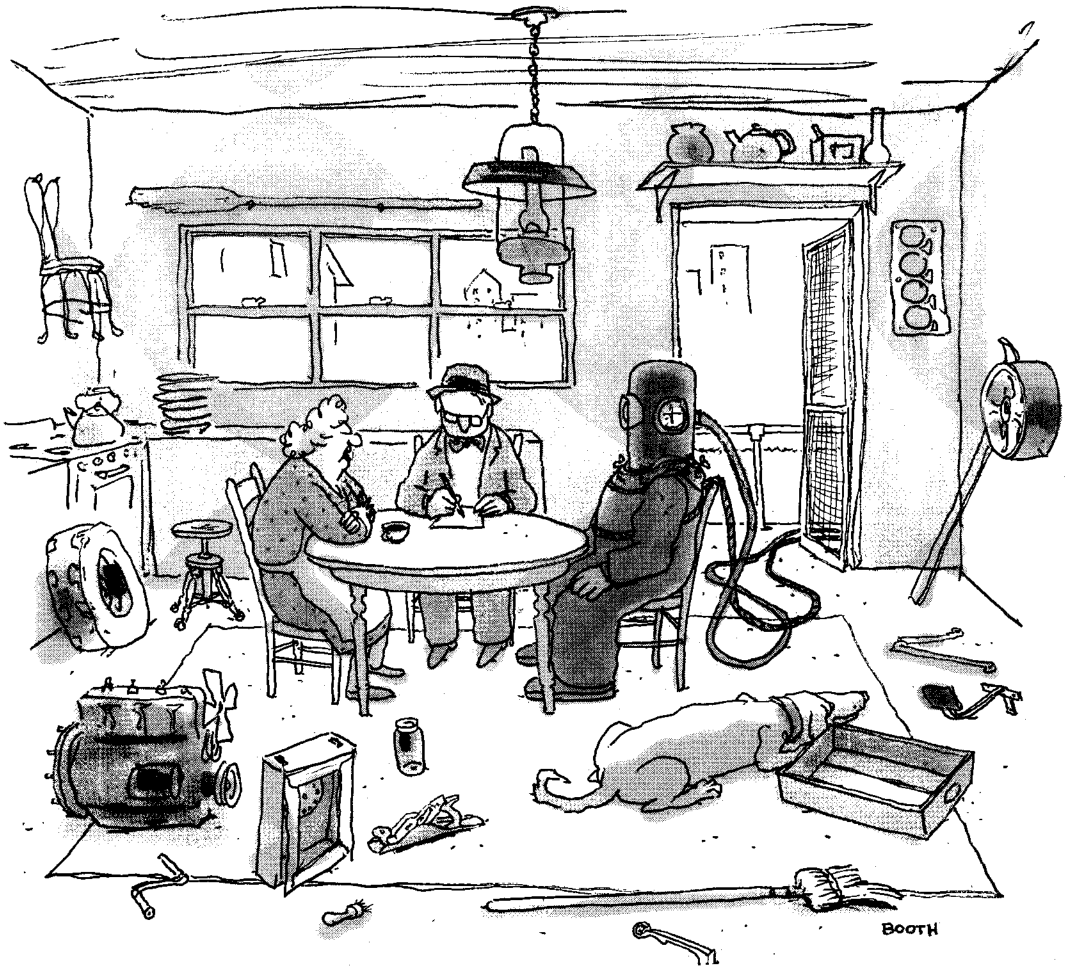
"Haven't I heard what?"

"Haven't you heard that Steve's dead?"

I can still hear the roar of the traffic through which the news first broke upon me. I walked on.

"It's no joke" came that voice again, speaking now close to my ear. "Steve's dead. They found him yesterday, in his room. I thought you would have already heard about it."

Even now, nearly twenty years later, I still do not altogether accept it. The fact of his death remains unassimilable—inadmissible. I know no other fact quite like it: no other fact so indigestible, so beyond the reach of acceptance. It is a void, a darkness I



"No doubt about it. Scientifically speaking, knowledge of the river will expand in direct proportion to the length of Mr. Van Gundy's new air hose."

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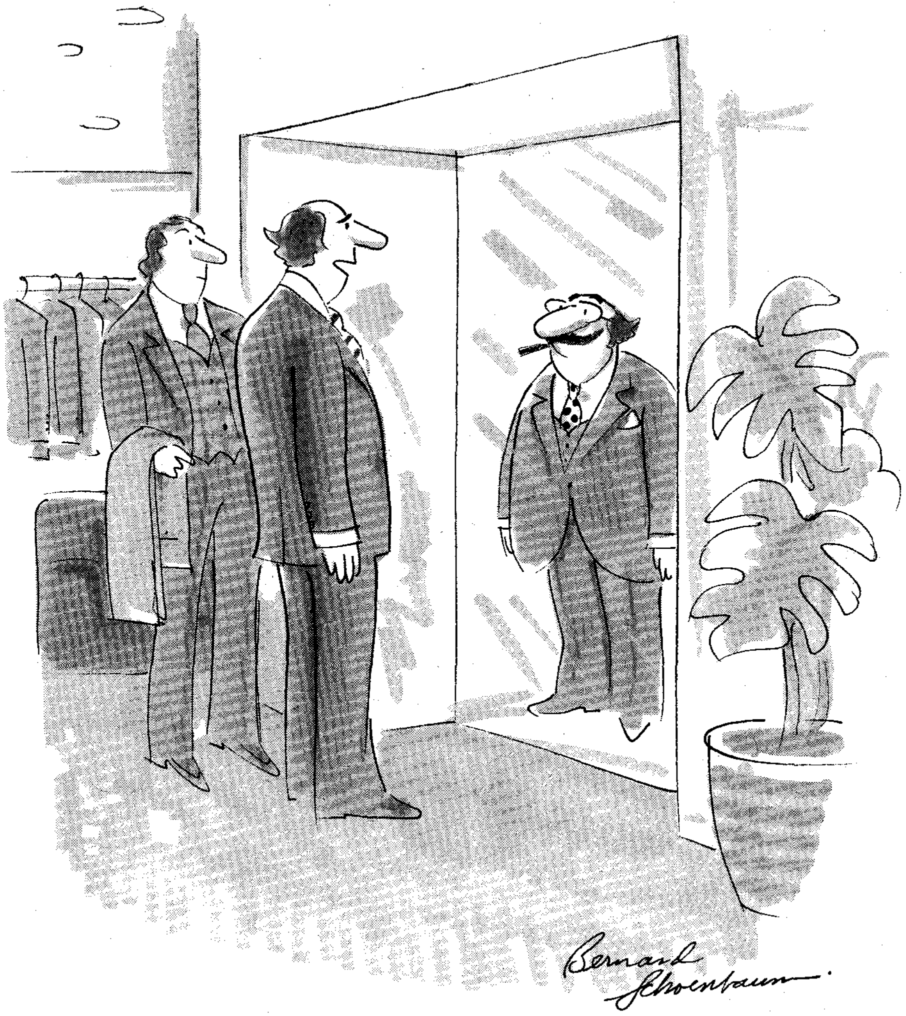


"Let's see something else. I'm afraid it's not me."

• •

instinctively circumvent. Conventional grief was strangled by sheer shock and disbelief. After that macabre exchange on the High Street, there were no tears. The only emotion I felt was terror. Terror for myself. If someone like Steve could be snatched away like that, could be so swiftly and so incomprehensibly annihilated, what about me? Wasn't I, too, at risk? Wasn't I, too, in imminent danger of being swallowed up and annihilated? My last vestiges of certainty and optimism melted away. The ground on which one walked was treacherous and unpredictable. Without warning, it could open up beneath you and plunge you God knows where. His death was like a sermon. It quickened and stirred all my subterranean fears; it revealed to me regions of nullity I didn't care to know about.

His family arrived for the funeral. I recall a tormenting scene in a hotel room on a suitably bleak afternoon. Steve's father was calm and studiously matter-of-fact. His dead son featured little in the unreal conversation. We talked, if my memory serves me right, about the Boat Race. At some point—almost casually—it was suggested I might be one of the pallbearers. I balked. Somehow, I managed to sit through most of the funeral service, staring at the coffin. But toward the end I could bear it no more. I fled from the church out into a rainy noon, bought a bottle of rough Spanish wine, drank it all in my darkened room, and fell asleep in front of the electric fire.

When, some weeks later, I walked out of that tutorial, Steve had been relegated to the lower reaches of conscious memory. But it was a very different young man who arrived back in my room. His life had effectively been broken; his optimism, his illusions of wholeness had been shattered under the most benign of summer skies. He would, somehow, have to start afresh. Another kind of life would have to be fabricated out of the ruins, a new self-understanding of what he was and what he wasn't and what he might be would have to be struggled for.

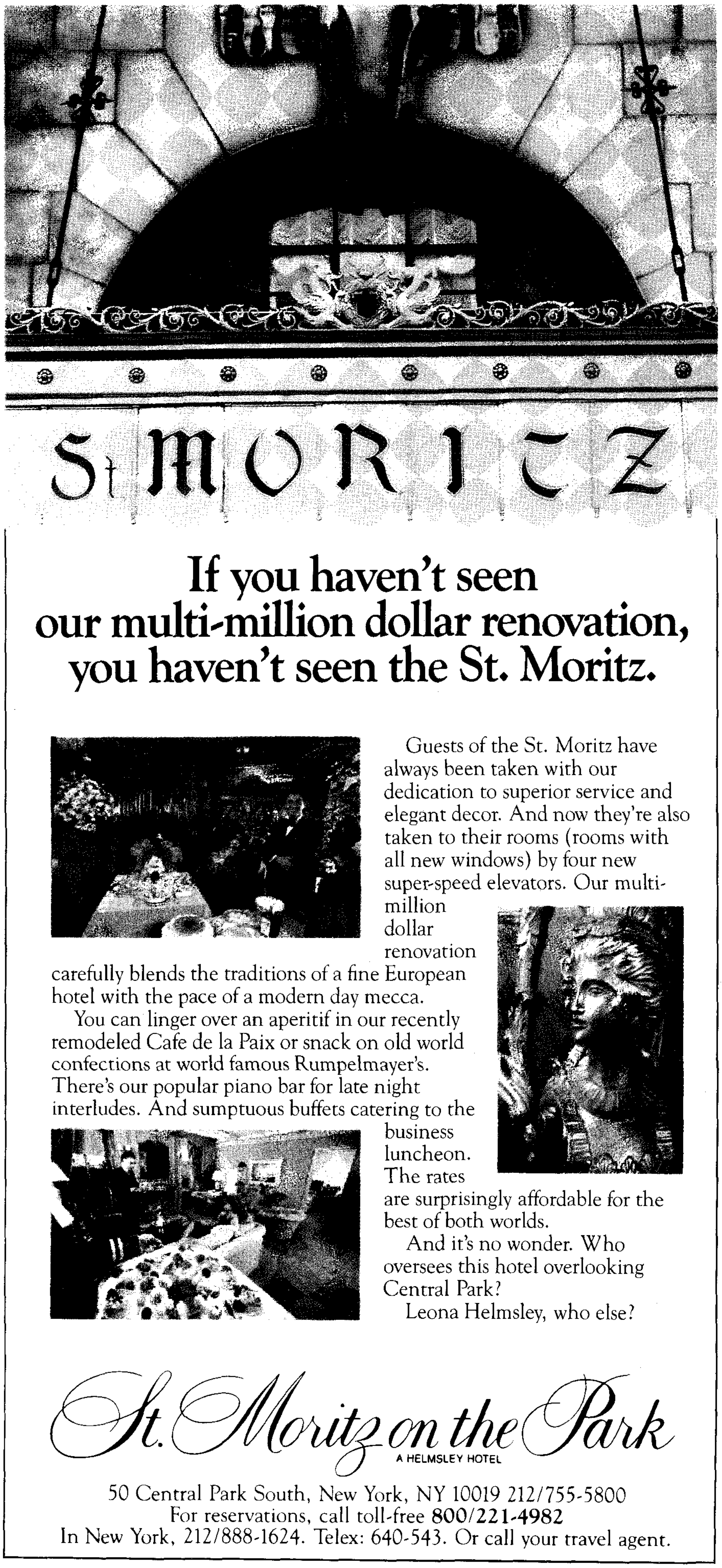
And what had he been, this young man? Out of what had he come?

BARELY two years before, on an afternoon of intermittent rain, I had sailed out of Port of Spain harbor—a young man wearing a specially tailored gray suit and a tie of subdued stripe, and carrying a brand-new briefcase with bold, brassy fittings. I had stood on deck a long time, staring at the green flanks of the receding hills, turning from time to time to look at the Dragon's Mouth, the strait beyond which lay the open sea. For me, the moment represented the culmination of eighteen years of dreaming, of intense longing. In a sense, my life as I had so far lived it had been aimed toward this climactic afternoon. The vision of it had underlain almost every endeavor, its possible frustration almost every fear. At last, I was escaping from the island whose narrow confines and tropical sameness had always seemed like a prison. What I had seen happening to so many before was now happening to me. It did not matter that I had no solid conception of the future lying in wait for me beyond the Dragon's Mouth, whose misty headlands framed the limits of the known world. The magical present was being savored not as a promise of future bliss but as a triumph over a past enacted in the shadow of those hills I gazed upon: a triumph over the darknesses and confusions and despairs of childhood and adolescence.

It was the narrow pursuit of examination success that, to a large degree, had dominated and darkened those years. This was less an educational process—in the broader meaning of that term—than a prolonged struggle, ruthlessly prosecuted, for survival. In a society so small and simple, so circumscribed in its perceptions and its aspirations, there was little other hope for release and emergence—unless, of course, you happened to come from a well-to-do family (mine was anything but that: my father, when I knew him, was an anguished invalid living on a niggardly pension from the newspaper on which he had worked as a journalist), or unless you happened to be what we, in our innocence, called "white." Those who were "white" seemed to need only the slenderest of intellectual resources to get on in life. Our "white" girls (their miscegenated creaminess of complexion cannot be denied) entered beauty contests, were lauded as Carnival queens, and, if they were especially talented, progressed to the status of “model;” their brothers strummed guitars on moonlit beach picnics and had offers of jobs from the banks and the more respectable business houses engaged in the import-export trade. It was rare to meet a bright “white” boy. Bright boys were either Indian, Negro, or Chinese. Those who weren't rich or weren't “white” had to be bright.

Rigor was applied from the tenderest age. The conception that learning could, or should, be “fun,” that it could, or should, be “relevant” (but to what?) did not exist. There was no indulgence of what today would be referred to as the child's “potential” and “creativity”—no sandboxes, no showy diagrams, no daubing of primary colors on virginal sheets of art paper. “A” was for apple. “B” was for bat. “C” was for cat. The cat inflexibly sat on the mat, and Dan was invariably the man in the van. The fact that you hardly ever saw an apple and that mangoes and pawpaws were not mentioned in the alphabetical catechism was neither here nor there. (I think we would all have been a little shocked and scandalized if mangoes and pawpaws had been mentioned: they belonged to a different, more intimate realm of being.) Learning was an abstract form of mental torture, reinforced by spasms of physical pain. The leather strap and the chalk stick were indissolubly linked. The system was not without its compensations. Most of us did actually learn to read and write and spell tolerably well, to add and subtract (so what if the teacher did sometimes say “substract”?), to divide and multiply.

My first experience of school was in a little shack in one of the yards adjacent to our house. It was an endearing example of Trinidadian private enterprise. I would wriggle through a gap in the rotting wooden fence. I would sit on a bench and practice my letters on a broken slate—the top right corner was missing. Daily, my ears burned from being pulled and twisted. Teacher was not a cruel woman: she was merely doing what was expected of her. She was, I now suspect, scarcely more literate than her charges. But she knew her alphabet, the demand for education was overwhelming, and she had to earn a living somehow. I must have been barely five when I used to wriggle through that gap in our back fence with my broken slate. My memories are touched with the evanescent



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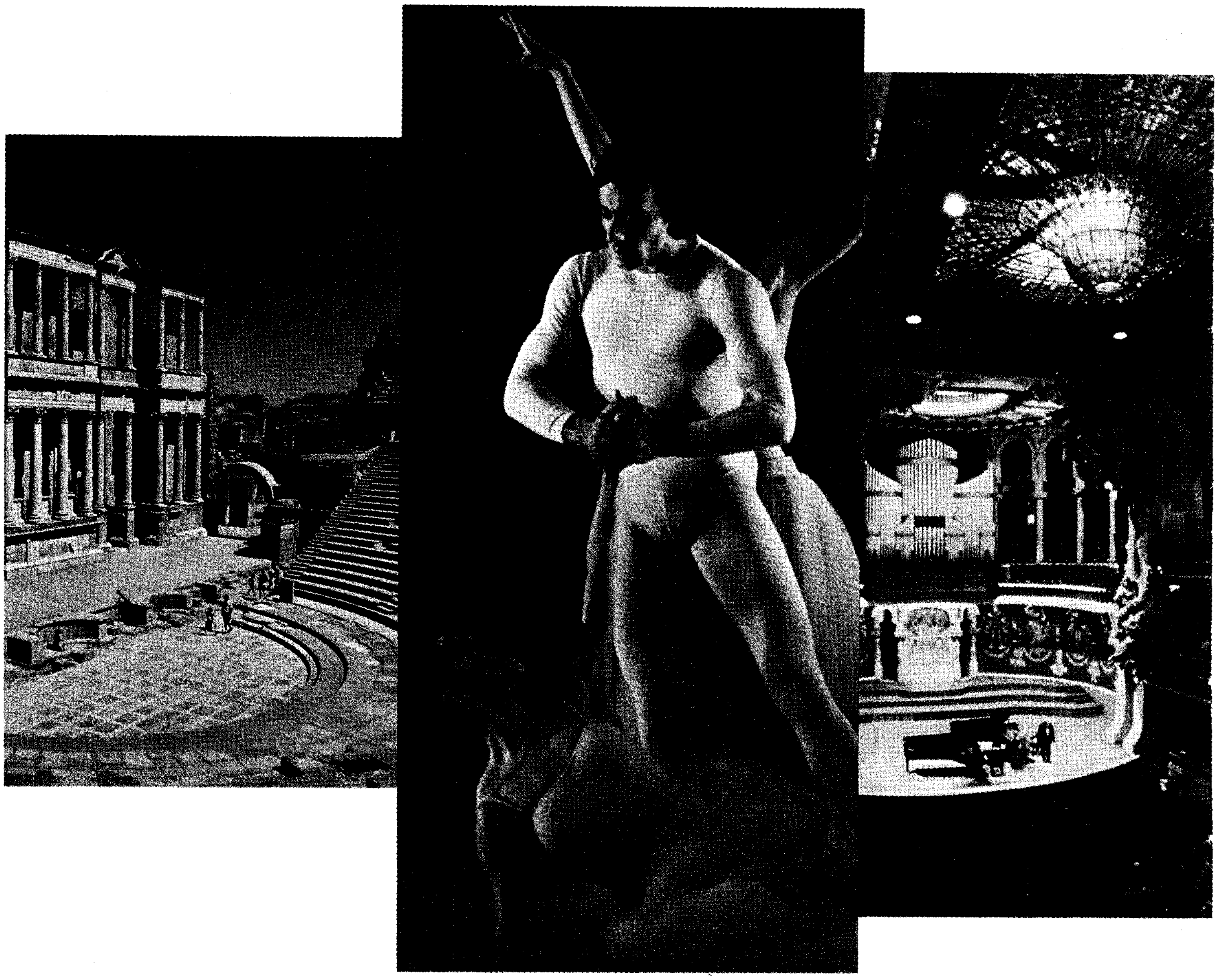

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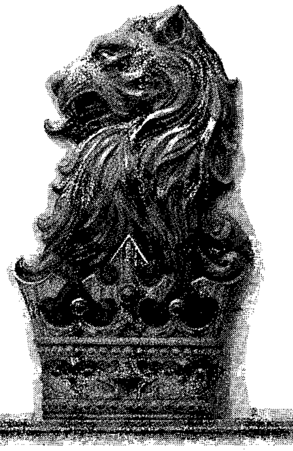

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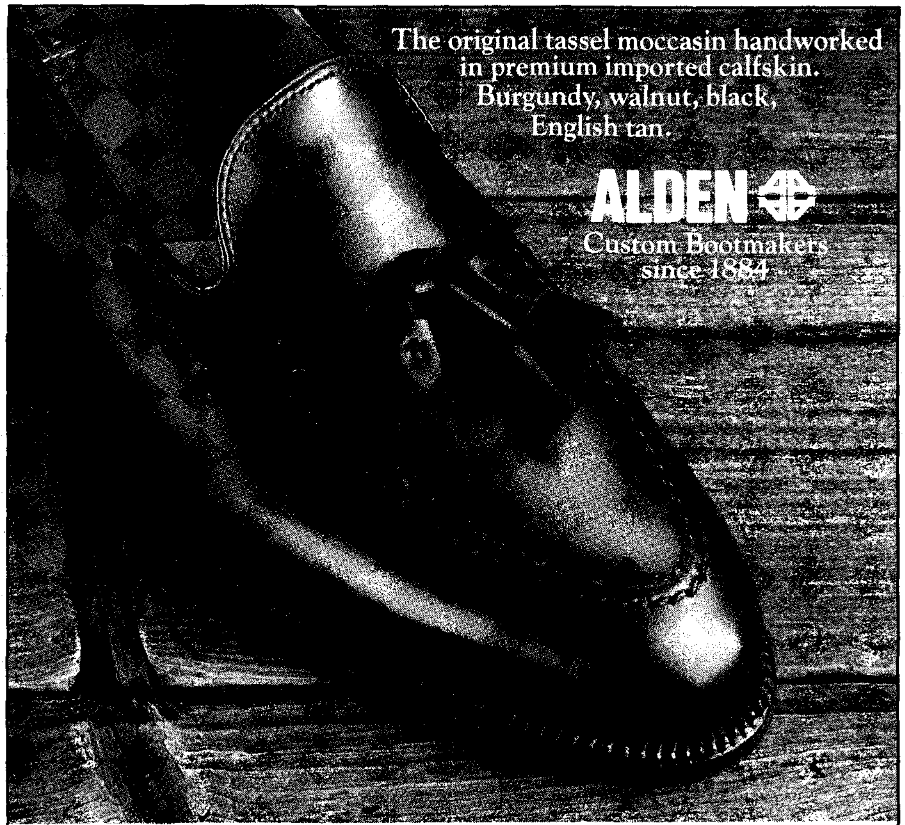

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shadowiness of early infancy. But I can still re-create the pungent odors emanating from the nearby latrine and the sour-sweet aroma of the yellowing hog plums that littered the black mud surrounding the shack that passed as a schoolhouse. Soon enough, I progressed to another young woman, who ran a larger establishment, at the rear of a Chinese grocery. (The Chinese grocer's urchin of a son used to make faces at us through the cobwebbed grille that ran along the top of the wall.) She was called Teacher Van, and was much admired for her strong and unsentimental arm. It was under Teacher Van's muscular guidance that I learned to read.

The distant goal of all this torment—oh, how distant! how fabulous a prospect!—was to become the winner of one of the four Island Scholarships, based on the results of the Cambridge Advanced Level examinations, that were awarded each year by the Trinidad government. The island offered no higher reward, no greater accolade than these. Island Scholarship winners were like gods among us. They were the elect, the anointed. Their photographs appeared on the front page of the local newspaper; they were fêted; girls of dubious but ambitious intent offered assignations amid the sombre glades of the Botanic Gardens. At Queen's Royal College—the secondary school I attended—the names of the winners were inscribed in black letters along the walls of the Assembly Hall, where once a week, wearing our thick navy-blue blazers in defiance of the tropics, the entire school would gather to be addressed by the headmaster. Standing in packed, sweltering rows in that high-ceilinged hall, looked down on with amiable condescension by the sixth formers (we all knew who among them were the most likely candidates for glory) lining the balconies above us, we smaller boys would stare at the columns of names that had showered honor and fame upon our school. Some went back to the last quarter of the preceding century, the remoteness enhancing the lustre of their enshrined success. Nearly all were well known in our island life. The name of an uncle of mine was there; so, even more intimately, was the name of my elder brother. An intimidating burden of expectation weighed upon me. Monday after Monday, paying only desultory attention to the exhortations and rebukes issuing from the rostrum, I would let my gaze roam over the walls and wonder if one day my own name would be added to the pantheon—if I, too, would be immortalized and become an object of veneration to succeeding thickly blazered generations. (That was not to be, for though I did win an Island Scholarship, I did so at another school, which, regrettably, did not celebrate its heroes in the same way.)

But long before one approached within striking distance of these glories there were obstacles to be overcome, each invested with its own special terrors, each threatening failure, the price of which always seemed to be extinction. Foremost among these was the College Exhibition, an examination you took at about the age of ten or eleven. This provided the perilously narrow bridge that took you across the abyss from primary to secondary school—that is, to one of the two or three secondary schools worth going to. The others, mere "high schools," of inferior status, had only the most exiguous academic pretensions: the best one could hope for after attendance at one of these was to be apprenticed in some inferior trade. That such a fate could possibly be lying in wait for me was unthinkable. The College Exhibition threw a long shadow, darkening the years of schooling preceding it. I would say that from about the time I was eight it loomed before me, poisoning all joy. The protracted run-up to it was, perhaps, the unhappiest period of my childhood.

Normal school hours weren't considered long enough. At the end of the day, there were compulsory extra lessons, which could keep one confined for another couple of hours, and during the holidays there were no less compulsory daily sessions of "private" lessons. These, apart from anything else, provided our teachers with additional income. Economic benefit fused with sincere dedication. It was the agonizing era of long division, of fractions, of decimals, of simple and compound interest; of dictation, spelling, "comprehension," and what was eccentrically referred to as "General Knowledge."

—What island is known as Little England?

"Barbados."

—The Isle of Spices?

"Grenada."

—A stitch in time saves what?

"Nine."

—What do too many cooks spoil?

"The broth."

—Spell "Czechoslovakia."

One's knuckles would be rapped

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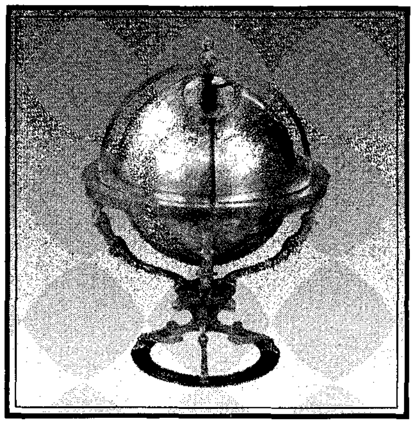

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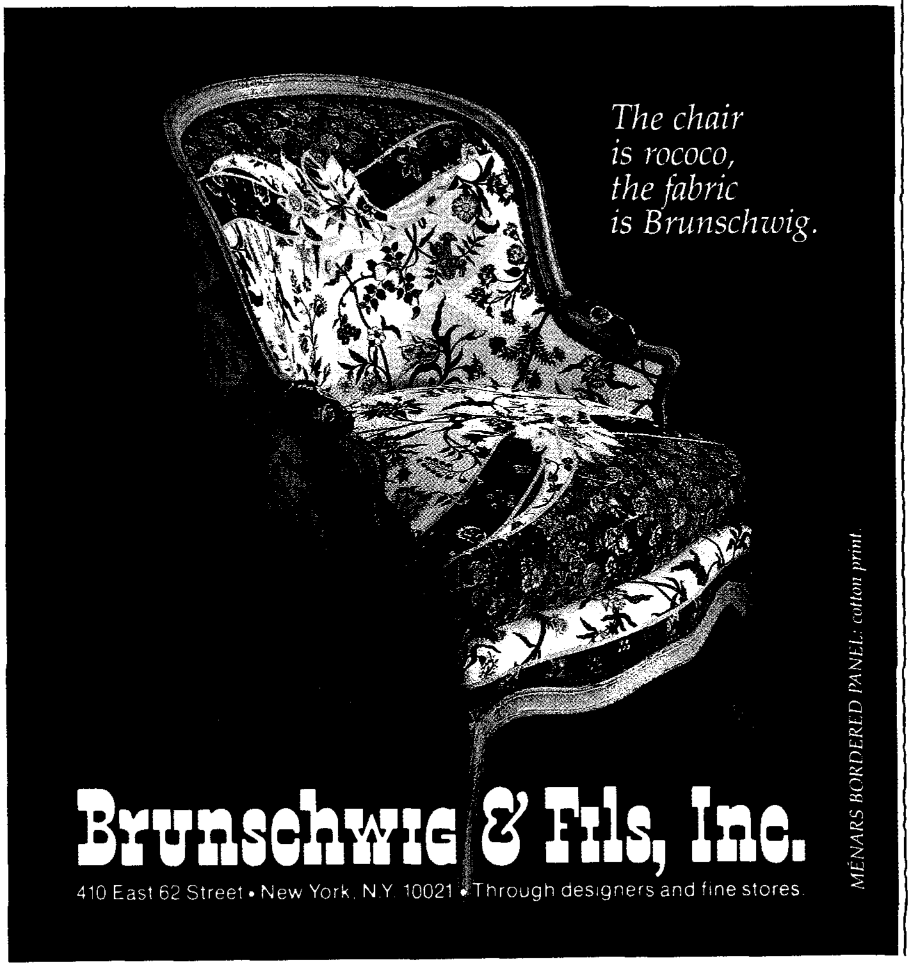

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with the edge of a ruler until they were bruised and swollen; angry fists would pound the back of one's head. I recall a memorable beating in front of a blackboard chalked up with rows of fractions, upon which I gazed blankly, petrified into idiocy by a leather strap—dark and supple as a snake—thudding against the seat of my khaki trousers, burning through the material like tongues of flame, scalding my skin. (That particular leather strap had acquired an awesome notoriety among us boys. Rumor had it that the teacher soaked it nightly in a mixture of oils that endowed it with its peculiar pulpiness of texture and fieriness.)

At one point, the misery became too great. For nearly a month, I absented myself from school, playing truant. So began one of the more eerie phases of my life. It was like ceasing to exist, like becoming a ghost even to oneself. My elementary school was situated in an eastern district of Port of Spain, near the central market. (I lived in a western district of the town: I was sent to that school because my mother knew the headmaster and admired his skills.) The market, a collection of cavernous halls—the fortresslike wall of one of its buildings bounded one side of the school's stony playground—had stamped its vagabond character on the locality. The immediate neighborhood was anything but salubrious. Dingy tenements fenced in congested, filthy streets; piles of decomposing matter, animal and vegetable, clogged the gutters, wafting up miasmic vapors into the stagnant heat of noon; stalls offering for sale decaying mounds of dates covered with flies—abandoned cargo picked up for a song—obtruded onto the slippery pavements; red-eyed drunks lounged in the dark doorways of bars and cheap eating houses, eying the drifting flotillas of women with shrill voices and with skins shining and odorous with sweat. I was too young to guess at the pleasures they offered in the alleyways.

For the first few days, a tattered canvas schoolbag looped over my shoulders, I roamed the crowded streets and the echoing halls of the market, slinking up and down the passageways between the long rows of stone counters—a vast mortuary spread out under the milky haze seeping through faraway skylights. I stared at gutted carcasses impaled on hooks: in the vicinity, the water in the drainage channels ran rusty red and the air reeked of stale slaughter and discarded offal. Glittering fish filled blackened wicker baskets pearled with scales. Escaping to the vegetable section, I lingered in the sodden aisles where women sold bunches of watercress, breathing in the astringency, half listening to their staccato exchanges of gossip and obscenity. Nobody ever challenged me and my schoolbag. In that part of town, you took life as it came.

But I grew tired of these explorations in and around the market. Restless, afraid of being spotted, I began to wander farther afield, away from the market, venturing down the quieter, balcony-shaded streets that led toward the docks, moving past dim Chinese restaurants, curtained "guesthouses," and the usual bars where the red-eyed men lounged in doorways, dissipating undefined longings and miseries into the hot afternoon. On Broadway, I peered into godowns piled with sacks of rich-smelling cocoa beans—in those days the island still had some interest in agriculture. Others sheltered bags of flour, which coated the pavement with a powdery film that, when it rained, was churned into a glutinous slick. Elsewhere were heaped-up piles of timber, stacked sheets of corrugated iron, and big crates stamped with the hieroglyphics of the import-export trade. I liked the aura of mystery that enveloped those warehouses near the docks. Gradually, my ramblings became even bolder.

A succession of shadeless afternoons found me walking along the road that ran parallel to the harbor, staring at the ships' masts and flags and funnels showing above the rooftops of the dock installations, and—beyond—at the flats of reclaimed land won back from the pewter-colored waters of the Gulf of Paria. Once or twice, tired out, my head aching from overexposure to the sun, spots dancing before my eyes, I took refuge among the wild grasses that grew there, staring out over the gray water, following the movements of the ships that crept like fragments of dreams along the whitened arc of the horizon. Did I ever wonder at myself during those escapades? I do not know. There come back to me, as I write about them, only the sensations of ghostliness, of invisibility—the compulsions of somnambulism.

But this vagrancy was too exhausting, and whatever charms it had soon began to fade. Then I remembered something. On one of the streets near the market lived an aging Indian couple, tenuous acquaintances of my

Polly Benedict

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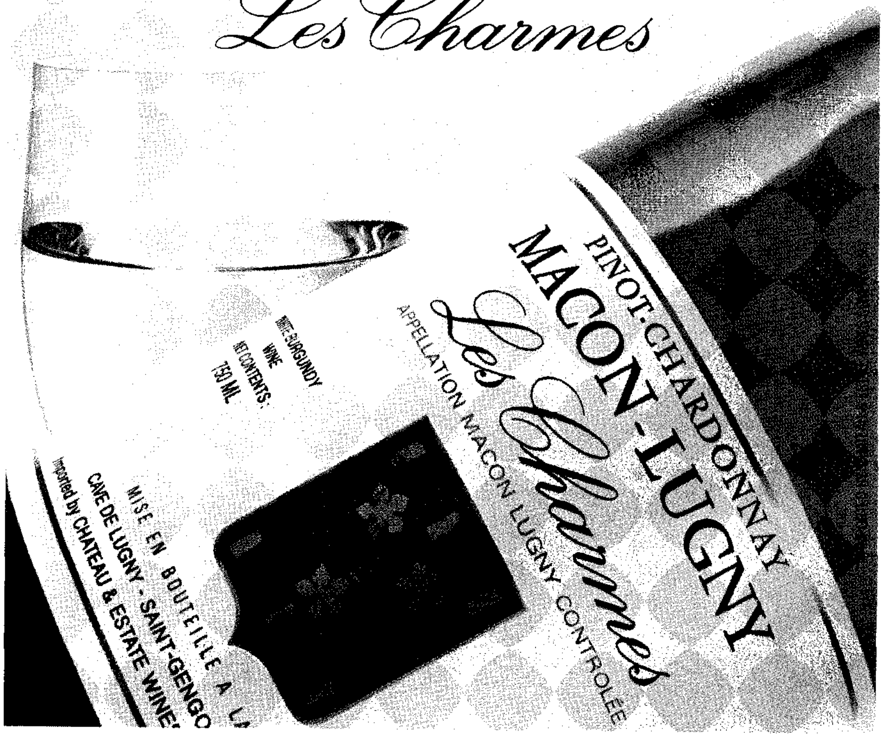
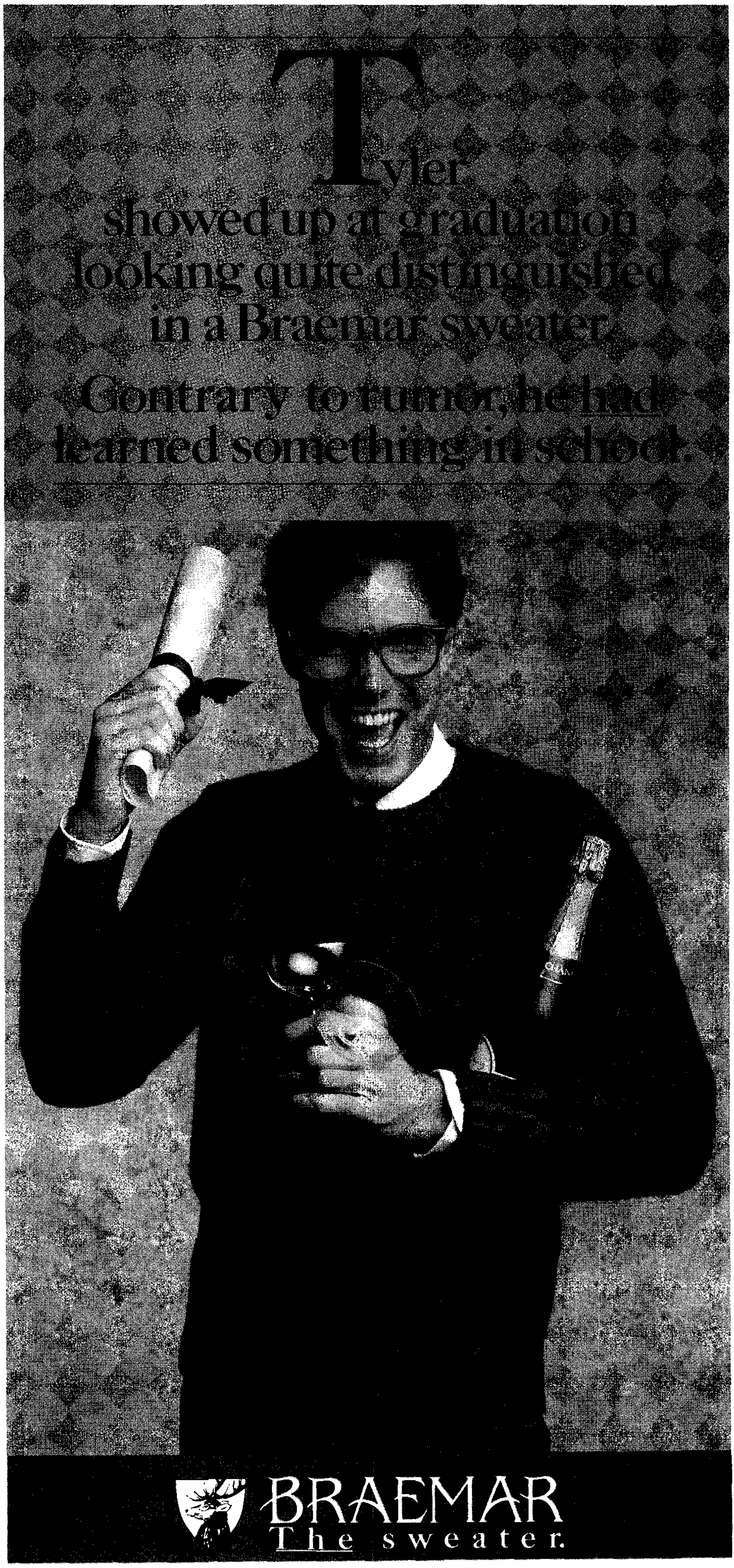


mother. I had once accompanied her on a visit to them—they may even have been obscure relations. A receding aura of impropriety surrounded these semi-derelicts: they were runaways, thrown together by an ancient and illicit passion that had led to marital treachery. Now it occurred to me that I might seek refuge with them. One morning, unable to face the prospect of roaming the streets, I presented myself at their door. The room they occupied was on the ground floor of a tenement, which was approached via a tunnel—where a charcoal merchant conducted business—giving access to a confused and crowded courtyard where (so it seemed to me) children were always being beaten. I cannot imagine what I said to them, how I explained myself. However it was, they took me in without murmur.

I had stumbled on as good a refuge as I could ever have hoped to find. Both the man and the woman were absent nearly all the day. They must, I assume, have done some sort of work in or around the market, though I was never able to discover its exact nature. Even more convenient, neither could be accused of being overinquisitive. A hard life breeds an instinctive discretion. The room, lit by a single, barred window high up on a wall, was murky even in broad daylight. Indeed, it was not so much a room as a cave. The amenities were rudimentary. At one end, protected by a folding screen, was a tarnished brass bed, its rickety legs standing in tins half filled with water—a precaution against marauding ants and other ground-borne vermin. A table with an oil lamp and two or three wooden chairs were the only other items of conventional furniture. For the rest, the gloom was randomly populated with boxes and sacks and bundles. I spent most of my time curled up under the table. Food was prepared on a coal pot placed near the door. Around noon, the woman would reappear and, crouching before the coal pot, fan the embers into life. I would watch her boil water in an old tin that had once contained cooking oil, knead and roll out the dough for *rotis* (our Trinidadian equivalent of Indian bread), make *dal*, and cut up and fry a mess of vegetables. Out of this I would be fed. The remainder she ladled into various improvised containers and took away with her. I saw the old man rarely. Stooped, toothless, purblind, he was generally mute on those occasions. Squatting on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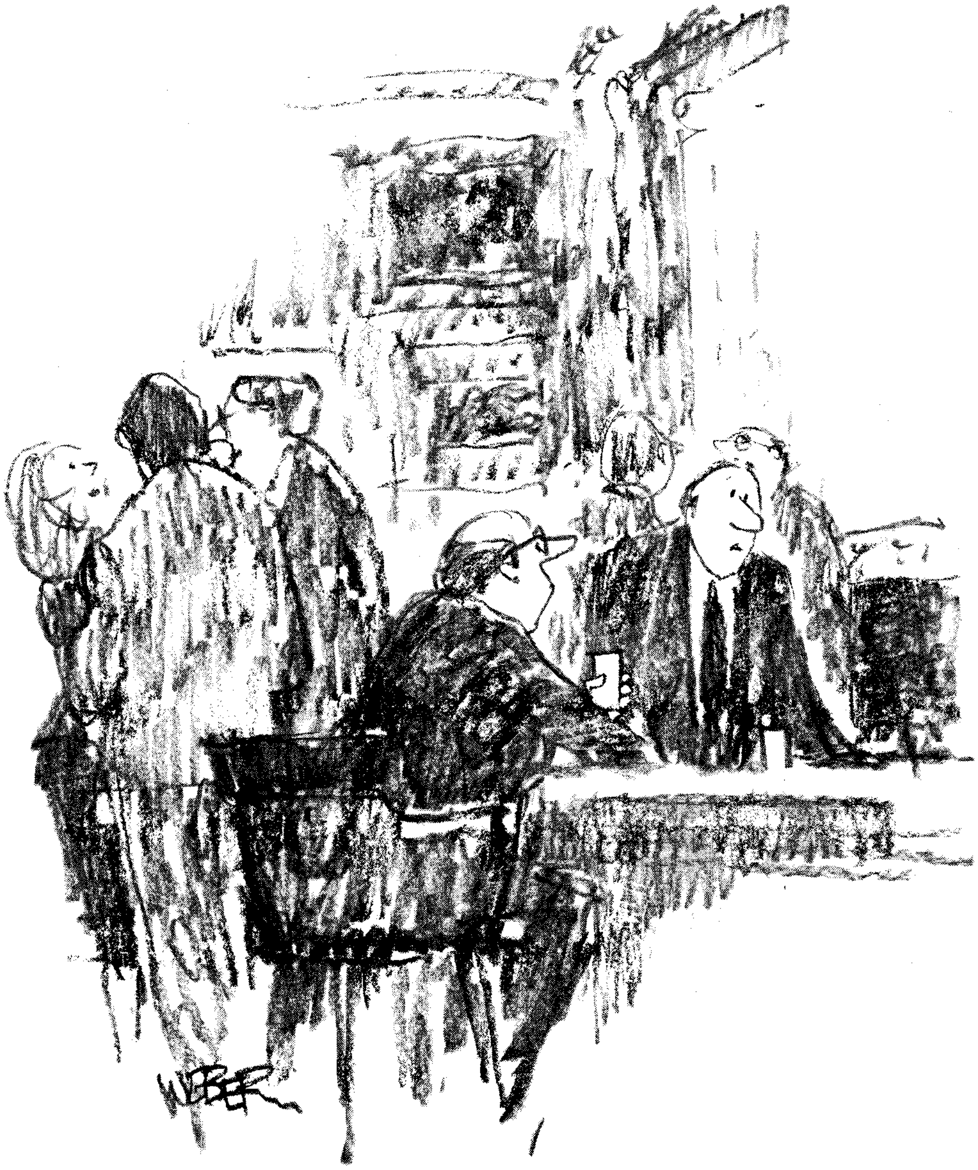
the dusty brick floor, he scooped up food with his fingers from the enamel plate placed before him. It takes an effort to reconstruct the passion that must once have overwhelmed their lives, that had led to their ostracism and, ultimately, to this curious troglodytic existence in a tenement near the Port of Spain market. But some of the original ardor must have survived. For when I saw them together the woman displayed a tenderness that animated their silences and rose above the childish fumbling of the fingers in the enamel plate and the juices seeping down from the corners of the old man's mouth.

One lunchtime, there arrived a young woman—daughter-in-law, as I later found out—wearing a dress of orange satin frilled with lace. A baby was propped on her hip. Sitting on the brass bed, she nursed the child. I was entranced by the sight of the milk flowing from her breast. Later, her husband—dark-skinned, with oiled hair and gold watch gleaming richly in the room's poor light—arrived. To my dismay, he seemed surprised when he saw me curled under the table, and stared at me with protracted curiosity. He muttered something to the old woman, who, turning briefly from the coal pot, glanced in my direction and shrugged. I was relieved when son and daughter-in-law went away.

The rhythm disturbed by this intrusion was restored. Another week or so went by. I lay under the table, reading and rereading the few books I carried with me in my schoolbag. My favorite was "Homes Far Away," one of the prescribed texts for General Knowledge. It described the lives (today we would say "life-styles") of exotic peoples: the Norwegians, who farmed on the edges of vertiginous fjords; the Japanese, who lived in fear of earthquakes and built houses from the flimsiest materials; the Swiss, who rolled cheeses down steep mountainsides; the Eskimos, who lived in houses made from blocks of snow and fished through holes in the ice; and, most alluring of all, the Kirghiz, who roamed the wide grasslands of Central Asia with their flocks and pitched tents of hide on plains rimmed by saw-toothed mountain ranges. Few other books have so enthralled me, penetrated so deeply into my fantasies. In that cave of a room, I lay under my table, reading, dozing, staring at the window, following the subtle changes in the twilight flowing through the uncleaned glass, drifting off into reveries about the Kirghiz.

It could not last forever. One morning, the son returned. Once again, he subjected me to a prolonged scrutiny. Once again, he murmured agitatedly at the old woman as she crouched in front of the coal pot fanning the glowing charcoal with a square of cardboard. Once again, she turned and glanced at me, nodding at her son. When I returned home later that afternoon, my mother was waiting for me. My truancy had ended.

I returned to school a penitent—garbed, so to speak, in sackcloth and ashes. Somehow or other, though not with any great distinction—I placed one-hundred-and-sixty-sixth in the island—I did manage to win a College Exhibition, thereby earning myself the cherished privileges of going to a decent secondary school, paying no fees, and having at my disposal a small annual allowance for the purchase of textbooks. Still, one-hundred-and-sixty-sixth. My family's relief was tempered by displeasure at that mediocre placing. The disgrace I had inflicted on our good name rankled enormously. A new pair of shoes I had been given was seized in a fit of rage and tossed with vigor into a rain-dripping patch of anthuriums. "One-sixty-sixth!" cried the furious aggressor. "Our Mr. One-Sixty-sixth has the nerve to sit there with new shoes and look pleased with himself!" Considering it levelly, I had been extremely fortunate. In another, less benevolent, less democratic era, when only a handful of Exhibitions were awarded, I would not have made it. Contritely, I waded through the anthuriums



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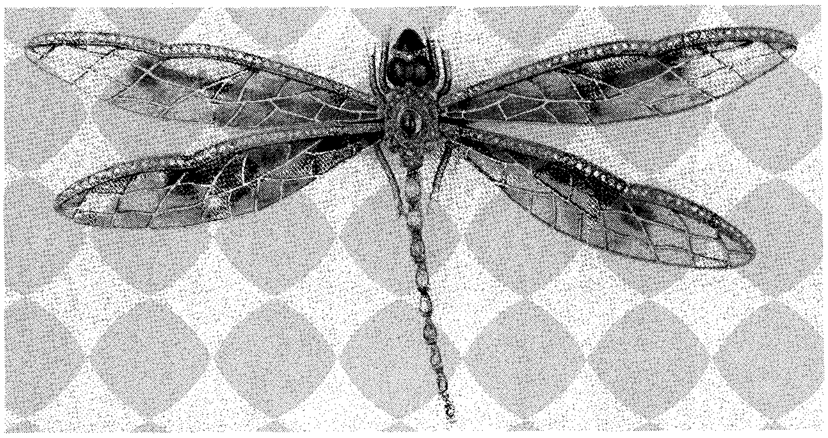

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and retrieved my shoes. They were a little soiled but otherwise unharmed.

ON my first morning at Queen's Royal College, as I sat resplendent in my new blazer, the columns of names enshrined on the walls of the Assembly Hall represented not an inspiration but a burden of expectation almost too oppressive to contemplate. Many of the other boys lined up in sweltering rows must have been gripped by a similar anxiety. Stories about bright boys who had gone mad or bad because they failed by a mere mark or two to win an Island Scholarship featured prominently in the island's mythology. I remembered there being pointed out to me a wild-haired tramp of middle age who dressed himself in jute sacking and lived rough. His mania took the form of pretending that he was driving himself about in a motorcar. He would mime to perfection all the motions and gestures and petty harassments associated with that activity: the changing of gear, elaborately executed hand signals, the sudden stamping on brakes—everything. In this way, he travelled great distances, traversing the length and breadth of the island. Not surprisingly, it was asserted—but with what truth I have no idea—that this demented individual had narrowly missed winning a scholarship. "That man," I was told, "had set his heart on studying doctor and driving about the place in a big-time car. If you could get him to slow down"—he tended to "drive" rather fast and recklessly—"and talk to you, you will see how much Greek and Latin and that kind of thing he know." I never did put him to the test, but to see that lunatic racing along the roadsides always aroused sensations of disquiet.

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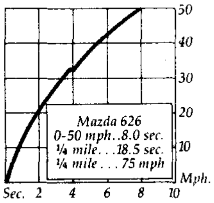

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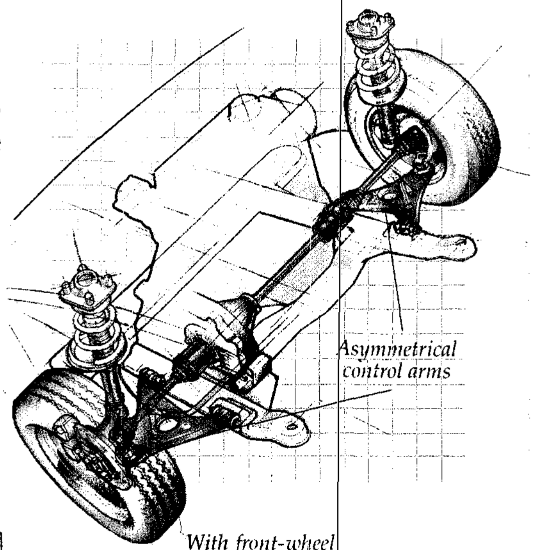

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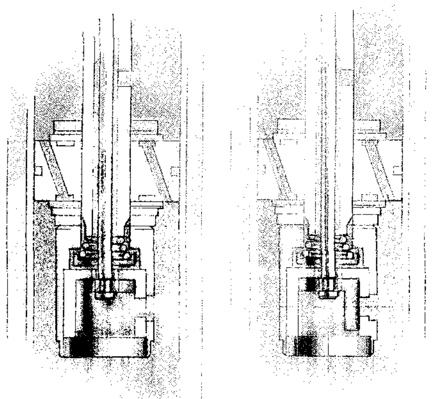

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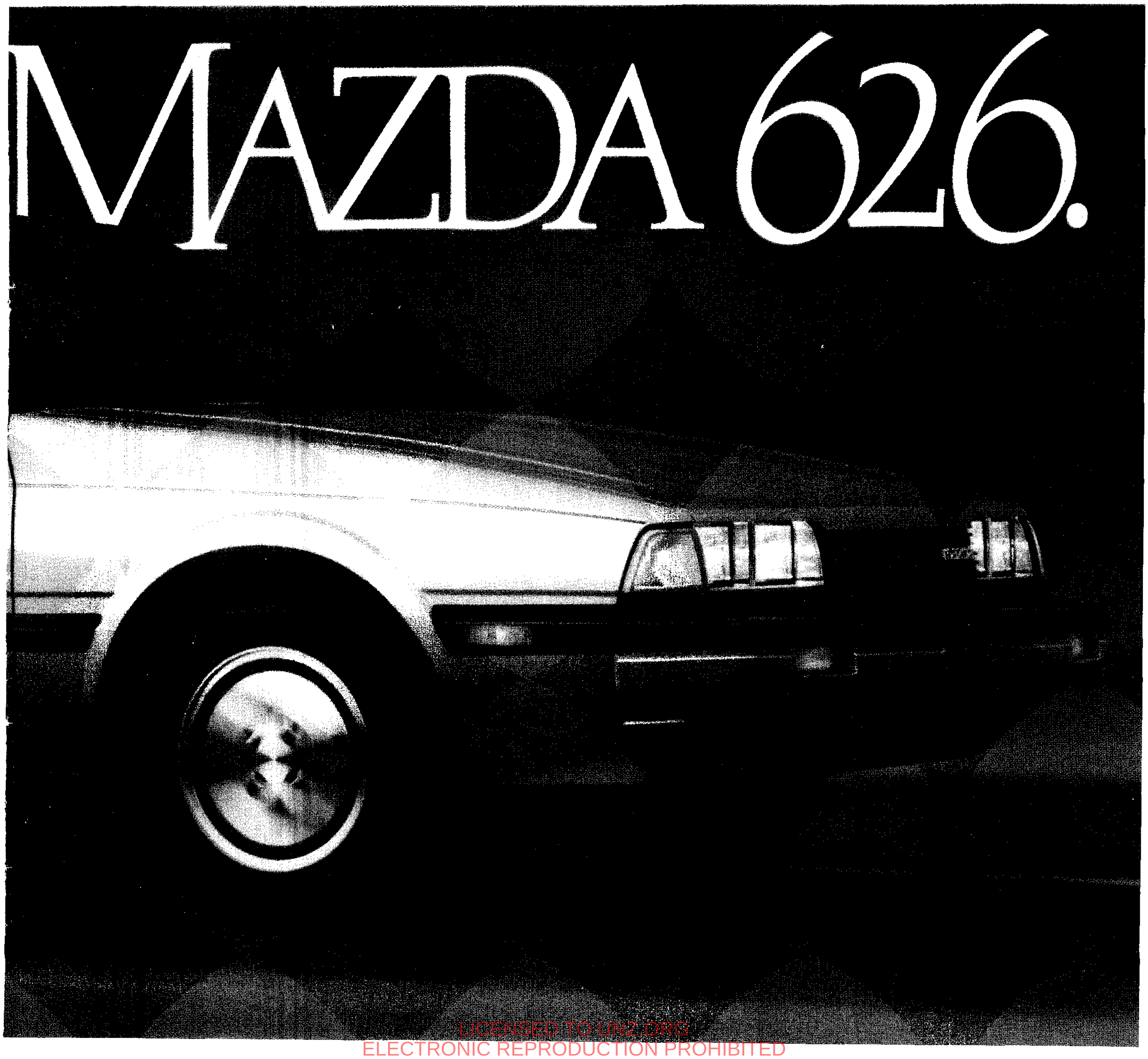

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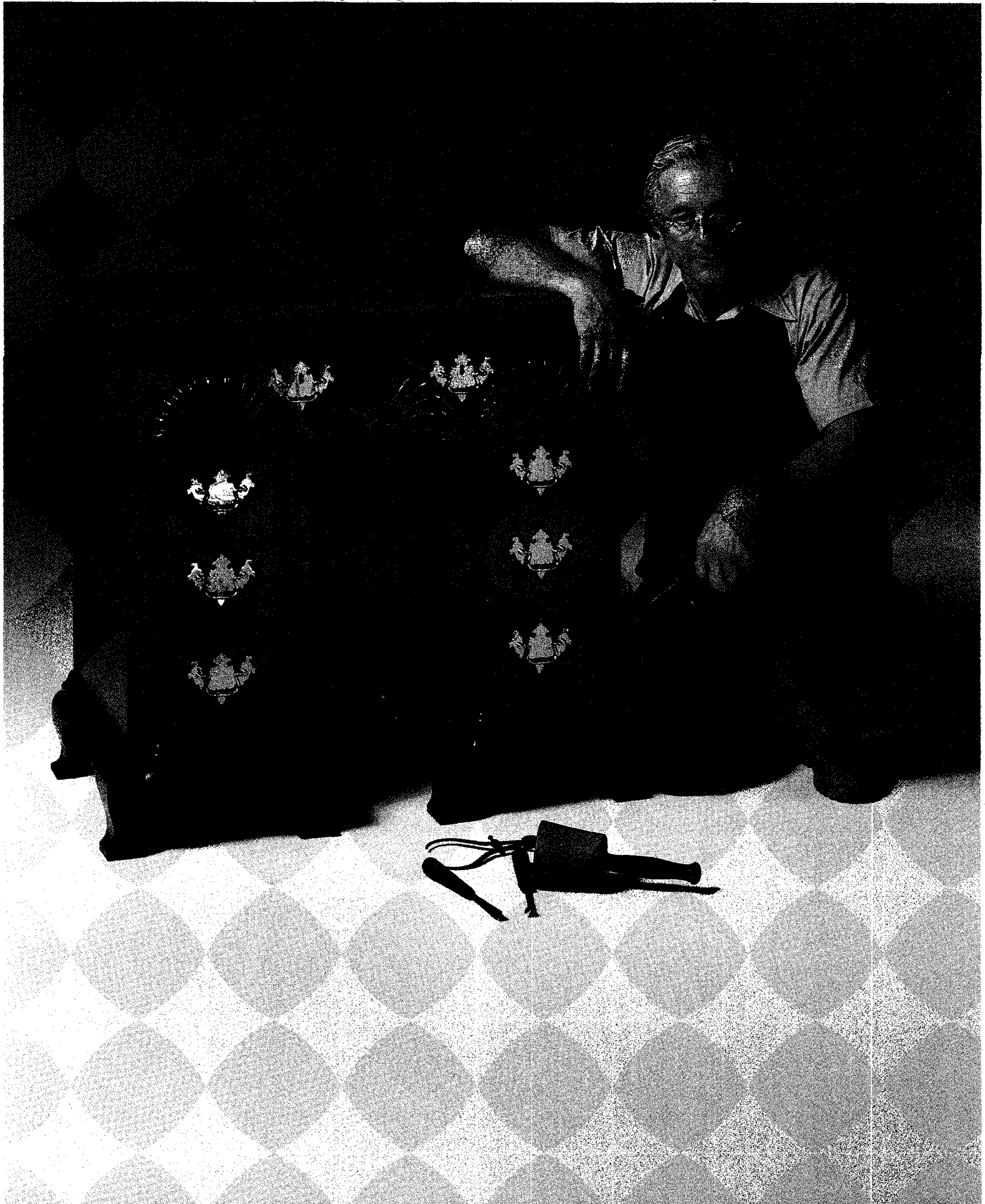

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in the tropical heat, treated their servants badly, imported overseas editions of the yellow press, and developed all the airs and graces crudely associated with the memsahib. The submissive clientele that flocked to their wrought-iron gates symbolized a power, a regality of status, that transcended the vulgar writing out of prescriptions and the transfer of money extracted from knotted handkerchiefs. The lure of medical practice was not commonly associated with altruism. There were no Lydgates among us. Trinidadians are not by nature a philanthropic or scientifically curious people.

But, alas, not everyone who wanted to could become a doctor. The thoughts of such unfortunate ones would turn to the lesser kingdom of dentistry—almost as good as being a doctor, almost as glamorous. And if you could be neither doctor nor dentist there remained the law, distinctly third-best but, all the same, capable of bringing considerable respect. Much gold was also to be had from that quarter. Yet there was nothing inevitable about that—and lawyers labored under the further disadvantage of having no obvious titular splendor. Beyond these three professions our imaginations rarely ventured. When you had penetrated the realms of the law, you emerged onto a foggy no man's land. Engineering, I would guess, was about as popular a choice as, say, electing to join the priesthood—and only slightly less mysterious to most of us. This last vocation was not quite as uncommon as one might think. It has to be remembered that several of the best schools on the island were run by Roman Catholic teaching orders. This had its effect. The Island Scholars who chose to become priests formed a small but significant minority.

Trinidad did, oddly enough, have one distinguished institution of higher learning at that time—the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, to which came a few students from the hotter regions of the Empire. But most of the students and teachers seemed to be British. They strolled about the grounds in short khaki trousers, smoked pipes, and stooped thoughtfully amid their neat little plots of experimental growth. No Trinidadian even feigned interest in that eccentric place. If it had been suggested—and no such outrageous sentiment was ever uttered in my hearing—that agriculture was an honorable course of higher study, we would have laughed; we would have judged it a symptom

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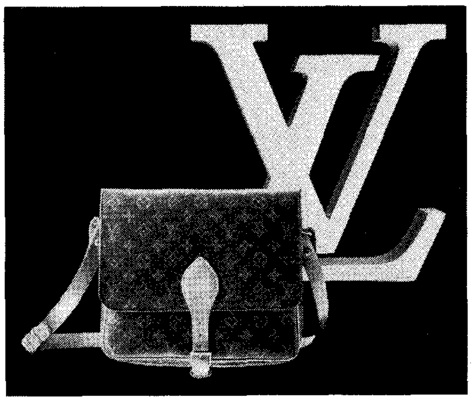

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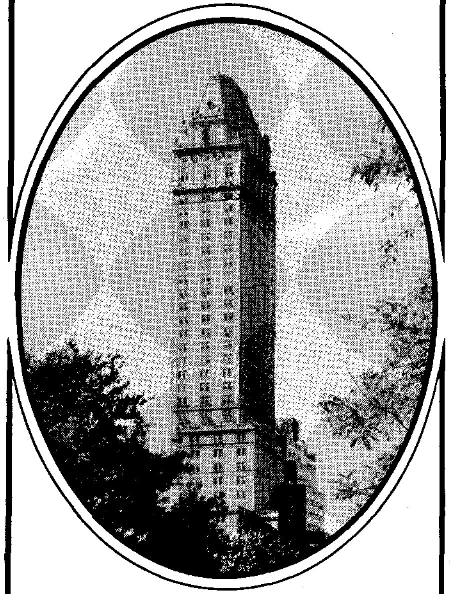

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of insanity. For us, agriculture was linked with backwardness and degradation. It was an occupation best suited to the "coolies" (i.e., Indians) of the countryside. Agriculture meant hard labor in sugarcane fields, villages of mud huts, illiteracy, the fetching of water from roadside standpipes, excessive rum drinking, wife beating, and murder by cutlass. Agriculture (and I am talking mainly about the upwardly mobile Indians: the blacks had long ago turned their backs on the land) was what you wanted to escape from—a bad ancestral dream. These attitudes were reinforced after the coming of Independence, when the government, put in power by urban-minded, coolie-despising blacks, ignored the Indian-dominated countryside—a process brought to completion by the onset of oil-fed prosperity in the sixties. Today, after a generation of "development," Trinidad is neither the industrialized country it wanted to be nor the agricultural country it once was. It drifts toward disaster on a tinselly tide of imports. These include not only transistorized goods (the late Prime Minister Eric Williams declared that every home would one day be equipped with stereophonic sound) but sugar. All over the island, you will see fields given over to neglect, ruined cocoa and orange groves. Our "liberation" is turning into a nightmare. We cannot go back, and, blinded by the greeds of insecurity and fear, we cannot discern any way forward.

My family, agonized by financial worry, looked at me and decided, without reference to my own inclinations or aptitudes (easily deduced from a long succession of school reports), that I should be a doctor. Not even in my wildest fantasies—in one of these I saw myself a pundit conducting complex religious ceremonies of inordinate length; in another I pictured myself a sailor boy who had run away from home—had I toyed with that possibility. Against all the evidence, and overriding my protests, I was shunted into the science stream at Queen's Royal College. Suddenly, hopelessly, I found myself having to cope with physics and chemistry (I was never able to distinguish between the two), botany and biology (no confusion arose here, but it didn't help me much), and, most terrible of all, additional mathematics. The result was another near-disaster, this time in the Cambridge Ordinary Level examinations. Once more, my family's reputation was tarnished by my academic disgrace. At this point, I

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was surrendered to my fate. Liberated at long last from other people's plans for me, I fled—I must have been about fifteen at the time—from the science stream, in which I had been so nearly drowned, to the more humane branches of study. I had entered the happiest and most rewarding period of my Trinidad education. Overnight, I metamorphosed into a bright boy—though one, it need hardly be added, without any sharply etched prospects. Overnight, I was seen as a potential candidate for an Island Scholarship.

Intellectual excitement—or what passed for it—arrived. It came, to begin with, in the shape of Bertrand Russell—in particular, his essays and "A History of Western Philosophy," which last I discovered in my father's bookcase. It was under Russell's influence that I declared myself an atheist—not that I had ever been troubled by theological questions: mine was a singularly pagan upbringing—and so gave my friend Steve some amusement while scandalizing the Jehovah's Witness in our class. Russell's "History" prompted a closer combing of my father's shelves. From these I disinterred, among the old-fashioned Penguins and Everymans, many hitherto unsuspected treasures, including works by several of the great men mentioned by Russell. I read (attempted to read) Locke, Hobbes, John Stuart Mill, and other, even more recondite authors. (Boethius springs to mind.) I became precociously familiar with names such as Kant, Spinoza, and Leibniz. My father's shelves led me in other directions as well. I foraged among the classic works of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century fiction, making the acquaintance of Flaubert and Balzac, Conrad and Anatole France, the monumental Russians, and, of course, Dickens. Precocity nurtured in me a febrile, inchoate iconoclasm—very silly, because we were not advanced enough to have accumulated idolatries—fostered by my fondness for Dostoyevski's novels. I read and reread the Grand Inquisitor sequence in "The Brothers Karamazov;" no less alluring was the murderous conceit of Raskolnikov. The old thrill returns whenever I pick up "Crime and Punishment" and glance at its opening lines: "On a very hot evening at the beginning of July a young man left his little room at the top of a house in Carpenter Lane, went out into the street, and . . ." That sentence always makes me want to write. (A few, select

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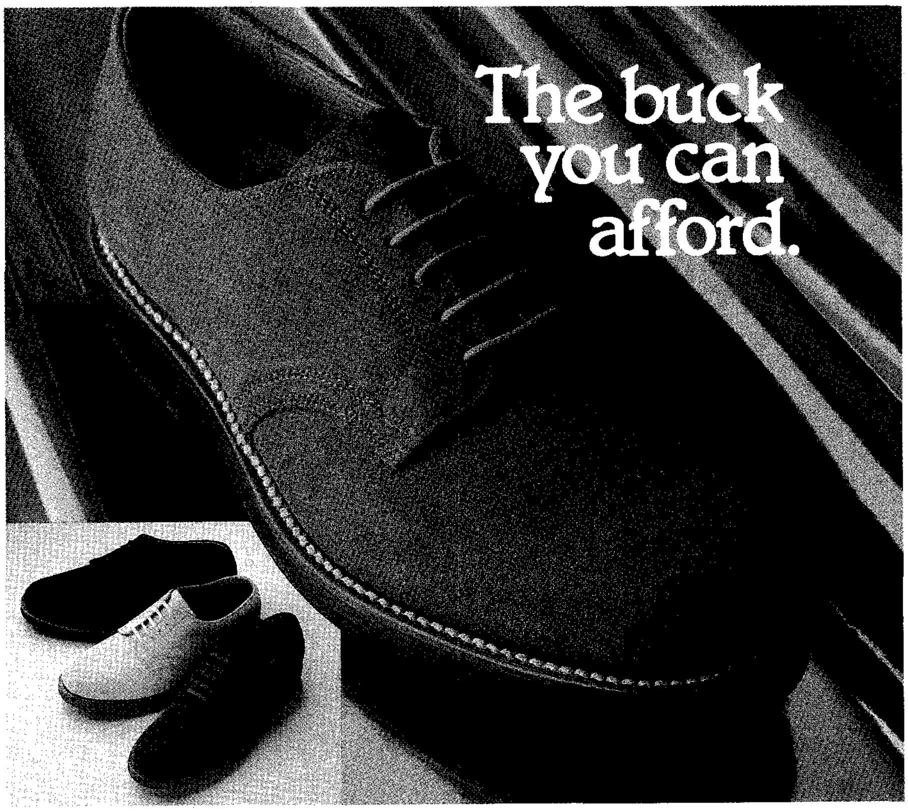

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authors have that effect. Most don't.) Hour after hour was beguiled away in our sunny, overwarm sitting room. Sprawled in an armchair, I lost myself among words and notions whose import must frequently have escaped me. But I was happy. Happier than I had ever been. Those stupefying yellow afternoons when the world around me receded evoke some of the lines of a poem that entranced me when I was twelve or thirteen:

I dimly heard the master's voice
And boys far-off at play,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
Had stolen me away.

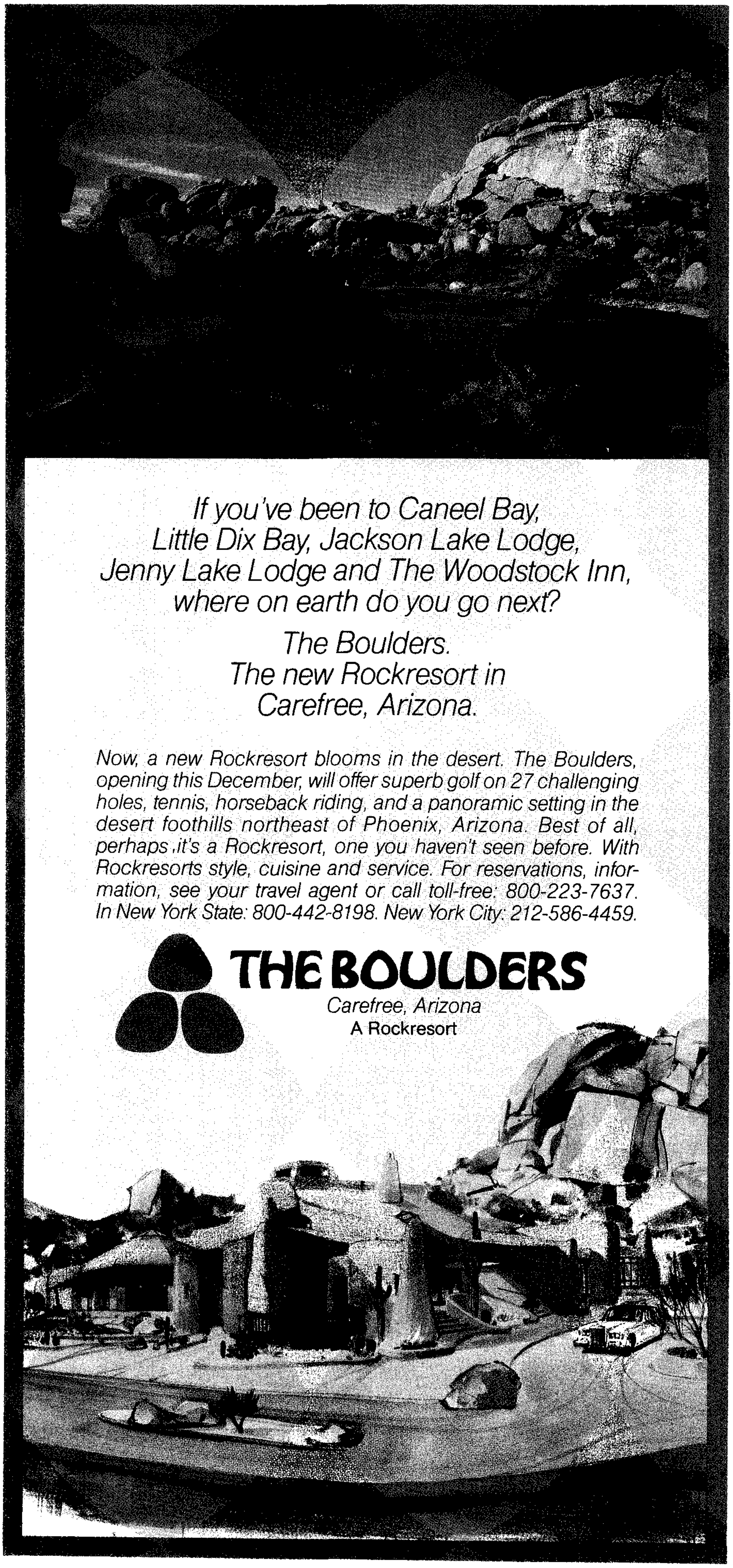
I walked in a great golden dream
To and fro from school—
Shining Popocatepetl
The dusty streets did rule. . . .

The houses, people, traffic seemed
Thin fading dreams by day,
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi
They had stolen my soul away!

It was an exalted form of truancy. I was up to my old tricks, seeking escape from immediacy—shutting out an environment that seemed so poor in possibility, the everyday reality of which was so tawdry and confining. Russell and Dostoyevski and Boethius had no meaning in the sun-drenched sitting room of No. 26 Nepaul Street, St. James, Port of Spain, Trinidad. They were spectres, unattached to anything I saw around me, existing only within the covers of the books protected by my father's glass-doored bookcase. From a strictly practical point of view, my time would probably have been as well spent in reading fairy tales. Considered more broadly, the meaninglessness extended to the commonplace gyrations of school life. How could any of us, however bright, really hope to understand the grandiose movements and conflicts of the European history we studied, on which the Cambridge Examination Board would one day be testing us? How could we, whose lives were so primal, whose experience was so straitened by simplicity, grasp more than the bare shadows of the facts peddled to us by our schematic textbooks? But life is sometimes kind, and it hid the void. Later, some of us would be sucked into that void and become as panic-stricken as any drowning man; we would realize the full implications of underdevelopment. Some of us would never recover.

Eventually, my hunger for the arcane took me to a little bookshop on a quiet street near the Queen's Park Savannah. Devoted to the highbrow, it was unique in Trinidad. (In the part of London where I now live, it would not attract notice. Such establishments are ten a penny.) Its proprietor nursed literary ambitions, and we soon became friends. Two or three afternoons a week, I would cycle to his little shop and explore its small but ardent stock. Now and again, if I had the money, I would buy a paperback. (Some of those paperbacks have survived my migrations: Henri Bergson's treatises on moral philosophy, Nietzsche on the nature of tragedy and the genealogy of morals.) The bookshop, cooled by the breezes blowing from the hills across the Savannah, its monastic peace rarely disturbed by the intrusion of customers, was a most congenial haven.

My new friend seemed to know something about everything. It was he who introduced the word "polymath" into my vocabulary. Our conversation—or, rather, *his* conversation—was wide-ranging and studded with erudite references. As he talked, he paced round the room, picking books off the shelves, reading aloud some appropriate passage or other to illustrate the point he was making. No matter what the subject—literary, scientific, philosophical, political—he was never at a loss for something to say. If Karl Marx (for example) crept into the conversation, he might produce the "Critique of the Gotha Program" and gravely support his argument with quotations from it. From Marx he might progress to a discussion of the "Jewish problem" in nineteenth-century Europe, in the course of which he would probably reach for one of Hannah Arendt's books. Or he might launch into speculation about the theory of relativity and from this move on to a disquisition—I don't remember how the connection was effected—on the nature of mystical experience. Mysticism, as I noted even at the time, exerted a strong subterranean pull on him. From him I first heard of Gurdjiev, Ouspensky, and Krishnamurti. "The world built up by the senses is only a convenient fabrication, a crutch on which we lean," he said. "We must pay attention to it because it conditions our existence. But beneath it . . . beneath it . . . who knows what there is?" He talked about the "middle eye," which was rumored to be in the middle of the forehead; I listened, enthralled, to his tales of yogis who had voluntarily entombed themselves for lengthy periods and emerged unscathed. Infected by his enthusiasm, I bought several books written by a man called Paul Brunton: this



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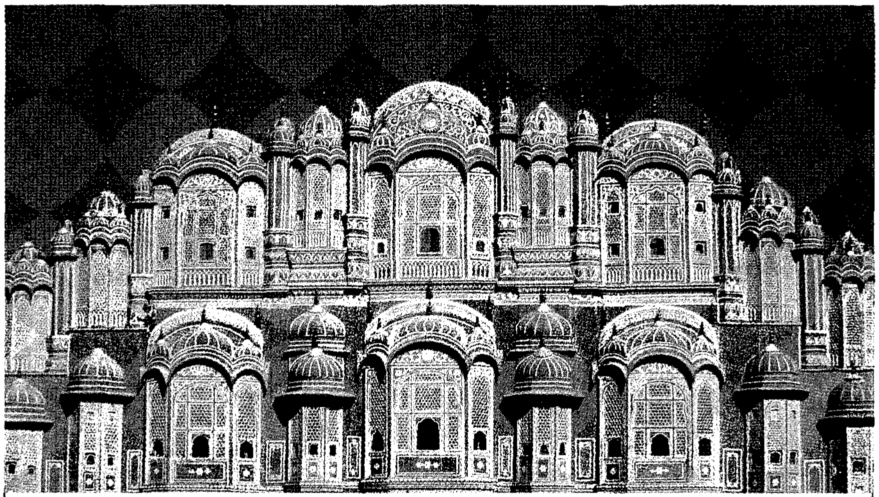

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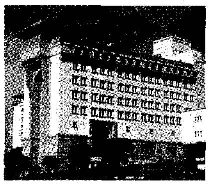

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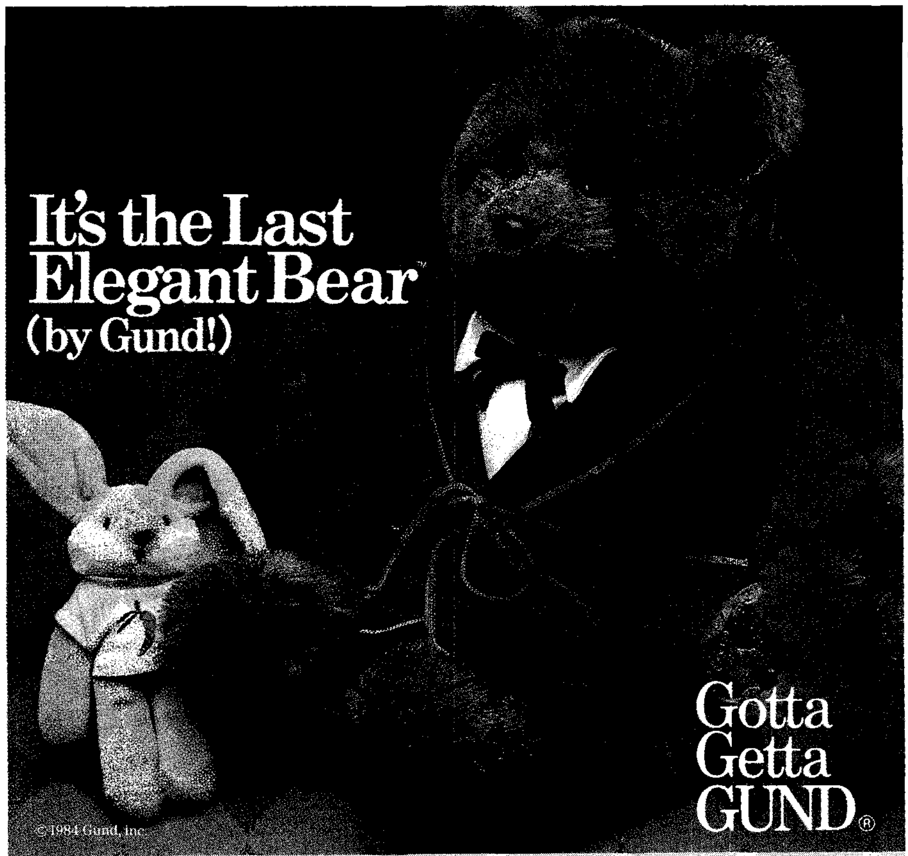

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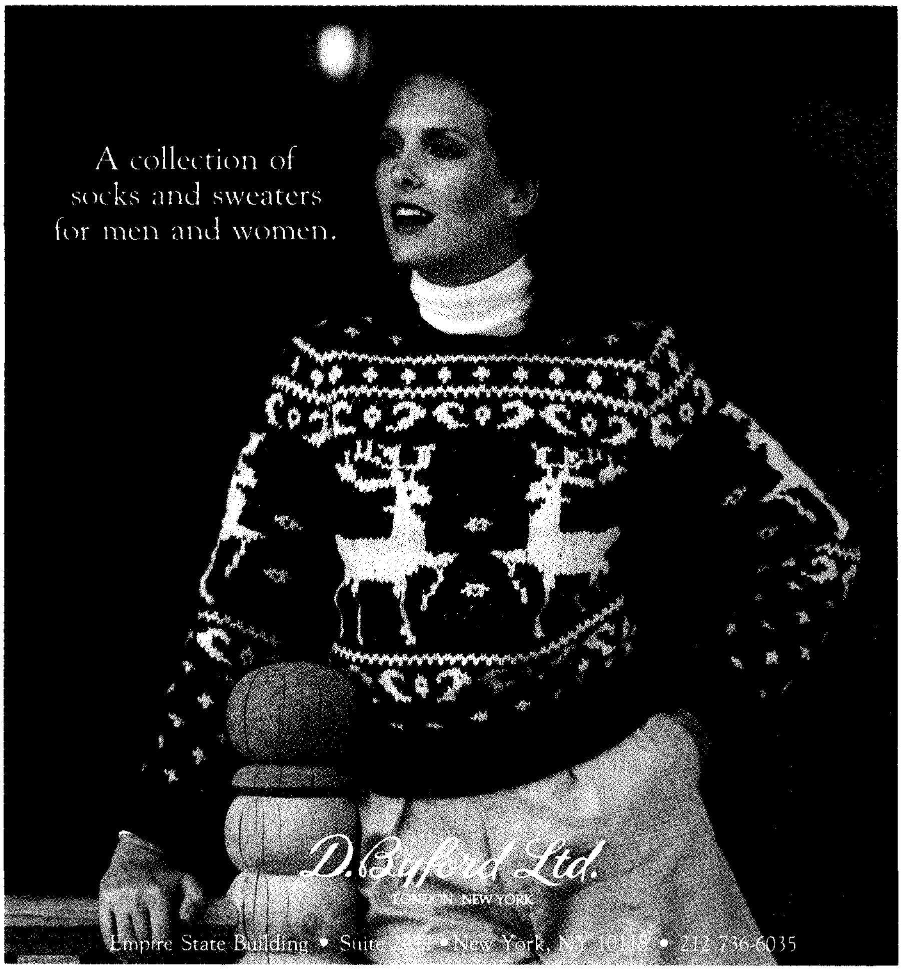
strange person appeared to have spent a lifetime roaming India in search of holy men with miraculous powers. From Krishnamurti my friend might digress to Annie Besant and the Theosophical movement, and from these to Gandhi and the struggle for Indian independence—at which point he was likely to extract Nehru's autobiography from the shelves. We indulged in a wild whirl, both exotic and rational. Often, as we talked, a deepening twilight would invade the little room.

Our friendship flourished to the extent that at one juncture he asked if I would like to look after the shop during his absence. The money offered was modest (about twenty dollars for the two weeks he would be away), but I was flattered by his trust, and accepted. (This was the first of the two salaried jobs I have had. The other came up some time afterward in London, when, for a few spectacularly unsuccessful weeks, I was taken on by a publishing firm engaged in the compilation of an encyclopedia, the brainchild of an entrepreneur who liked comparing himself to Diderot: most of that wretched interlude was spent rewriting the commissioned entries on lichens and Leonardo da Vinci—I was working on the "L"s.) I enjoyed the monastic seclusion of the shop during those two weeks. Hardly anyone ever disturbed its sepulchral solitude, and all day long I sat at the desk, fanned by the Savannah breezes, reading whatever took my fancy. I behaved like a child who has been let loose in a sweetshop. All the same, it was impossible not to wonder how my friend managed to make a living out of it. The twenty dollars I was paid I spent on books. The economics of the transaction continues to puzzle me. Did he make a profit out of me? Or did I make a profit out of him? Or did we merely maintain the status quo? Many years later, on a brief visit to Trinidad, I made the pilgrimage to the quiet street near the Queen's Park Savannah. The bookshop had disappeared. Eventually, however, I tracked down my old friend. He was, I was pleased to find out, still involved in the book trade. But he was no longer the man I had known. He had had severe nervous troubles. The result was that his mystical tendencies had—so, at any rate, it seemed to me—taken over completely. We had no common language; in our different ways, we had become ghosts to each other. The world built by the senses—that "convenient fabrication" we had talked about long ago in the twilit shop—had virtually ceased to matter to him, had virtually, so far as he was concerned, ceased to exist.

It was some fifteen years before that last, saddening encounter that my photograph had appeared in the newspaper. There, staring out of the front page, was no mere future doctor or dentist or lawyer. There was a future philosopher! There, declaring himself before all, was a would-be unraveller of the mysteries of life and of the universe! The gawky adolescent in his gray suit and striped tie who some months later leaned against the deck rails, contemplating with an air of triumph the receding hills and rooftops of Port of Spain, turning from time to time to gaze at the headlands framing the Dragon's Mouth, did not know his deep absurdity—did not know that his ship was bearing him not from darkness to enlightenment but from ignorance to confusion. He did not suspect that one day his own life, his own nebulous and unstable identity, would become for him the greatest mystery and challenge of all.

IN one of my books I wrote the following about myself: "At the age of eighteen (which was when I left Trinidad), I was haphazardly cobbled together from bits and pieces taken from everywhere and anywhere. The ugly parallel that suggests itself is one of those shantytown hovels built up from whatever dross comes to hand . . . I had inherited no culture; no particular outlook; no particular form." And in a recent novel of mine one of the characters says, "I grew up, you know, without allegiance to anything. . . . Every day I have to reinvent myself." Both these statements, I am aware, have about them a glimmer of extremism. They may even, I daresay, convey to hostile eyes an inverted conceit. The latter I would deny. As to the former, what is there to be said other than that I simply state a truth? That if I seem, on a shallow reading, to be extreme it is only because the condition I try to describe *is* extreme.

"Culture"—in its aggressively political aspect—is a term much used and abused. It is an ineffable something we are all expected to have, to express at every opportunity, and to protect fiercely from outside interference: an inalienable birthright, you might say. Some cultures are startlingly recent revelations—the Rastafarians, who a generation ago did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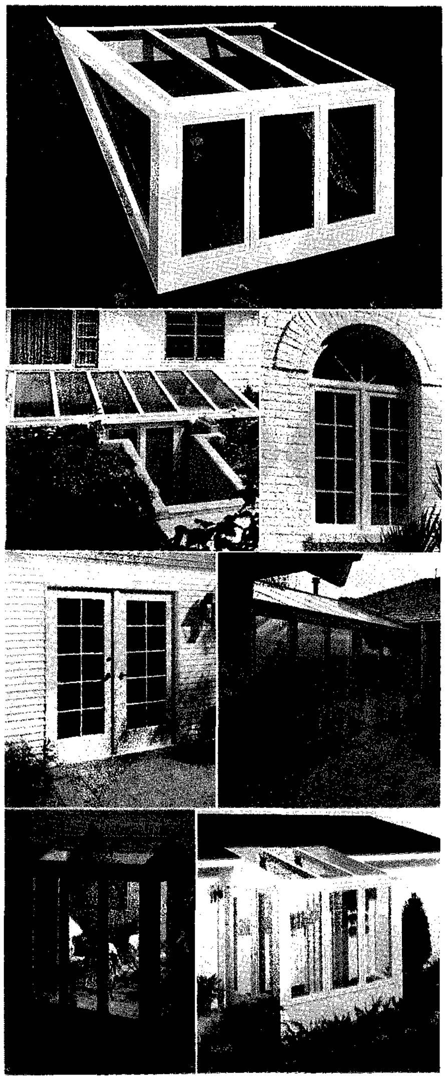

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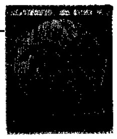

not exist, now constitute a fully fledged dimension of "blackness" and, to a credulous white audience, proclaim ganja-smoking an essential part of their heritage. Even women—women, that is, as distinct from men—claim to have unearthed a culture of their own, a culture buried under thousands of years of male domination. No notion is foggier or harder to pin down. Insofar as I understand it, culture seems, at bottom, to imply a specific state of collective being, intimately harbored by the individual representative of the specific tribe and expressing itself in certain specific tendencies, modes of behavior, and ways of knowing. In other words, it defies analysis. It can mean everything, and therefore constantly runs the danger of meaning nothing. As such, it is perfectly adapted to the requirements of soapbox oratory and politics—as viscerally appealing as the "women and children" rhetoric beloved by the demagogues of an earlier age. Militant blacks are hopelessly addicted to the notion.

The Oxford English Dictionary offers some relief from all this. Culture, it says, is "the training, development, and refinement of mind, tastes, and manners; the condition of being thus trained and refined; the intellectual side of civilization." One sees straightaway the dangers embedded in this definition. "Refinement," "manners," "intellectual"—these are like red rags to a bull. Already I can hear the accusations of "élitism," "cultural imperialism," "class arrogance" ringing in my ears. Being of a pacific disposition, I shall omit these contentious extensions of the definition, and simply confine myself to culture as the training of tastes and the condition of being thus trained. It is in that elementary sense that I assert my own lack of a culture—the unnerving perception of having been disinherited a long time ago, of having been cut off without a penny and cast adrift. I was not trained to anything; I was heir to no coherent and clearly identifiable body of tastes, prejudices, loyalties, and behavior. The culture that would have provided such a training did not exist. It was already largely disintegrated—reduced, at best, to a nostalgic ruin—by the time I was born, and this state of affairs deteriorated steadily as I grew up. I was a waif, inhabiting a makeshift world in which all the landmarks had been effaced, in which there were no maps and no guides.

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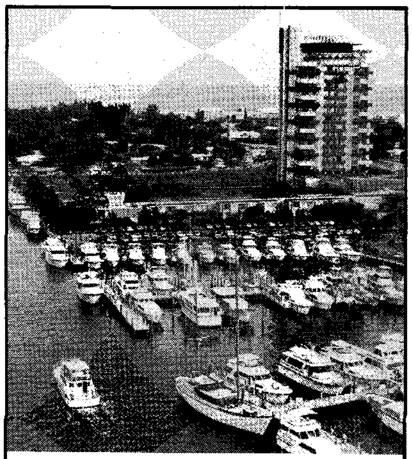

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way of life known to the older members of my family (a gap of nearly twenty-five years separates my eldest and youngest sisters) had all but dissolved by my day, had been split up into various, often warring fragments, each of which rigorously pursued its own interests. By the time I was born, the family's living link with the countryside, with the sugarcane estates of the Caroni plains, had been effectively broken. About that other life I knew virtually nothing. I was a town boy through and through. The country belonged to a vague prehistory. Admittedly, many of my father's relations continued to squeeze out a rural existence, maintaining the traditional connection with the world of the sugar estates. But they, too, though more slowly and precariously, were transforming themselves. Older sons were taking to schoolteaching and taxi-driving (some of my paternal first cousins combined both these trades), the girls talked of going to England and training as nurses or hairdressers, younger sons murmured about medicine and the law.

I was never especially close to my father's family. Somehow, they had remained in the background of the everyday scheme of things, marginal presences in my Port of Spain life. So peripheral were they that I often had no idea who was who—and, for the most part, that ignorance persists. From time to time, one or another of my father's relations would turn up at our house, or, succumbing to impulse, we would take a Sunday-morning drive down to Caroni and spend the day sitting and reclining in hammocks made of jute sacking, staring out from the shade of thatched roofs at the dreary, rustling acres of sugarcane. Again and again, kindly men and women, reddened by the sun, smelling richly of dust and woodsmoke and grass, would urge me to come and spend time with them. But nothing ever came of these invitations. A foolish citified pride and apprehension made me hold myself aloof from them. For a long time, I did not understand that the wrinkled old woman we called Poowah, who could speak barely a word of English and was most comfortable when squatting on the floor chain-smoking cigarettes between cupped palms, succumbing to strangulated spasms of coughing that made her eyes water—for a long time I did not understand that she was actually my father's sister. Even when I grasped that fact, its significance never

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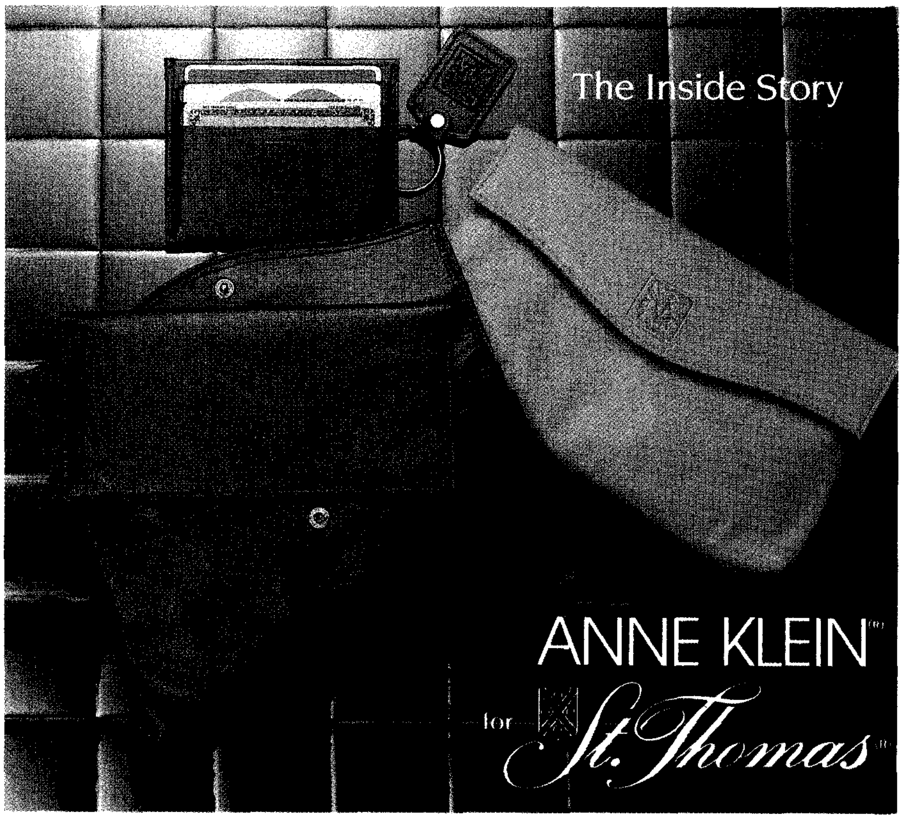

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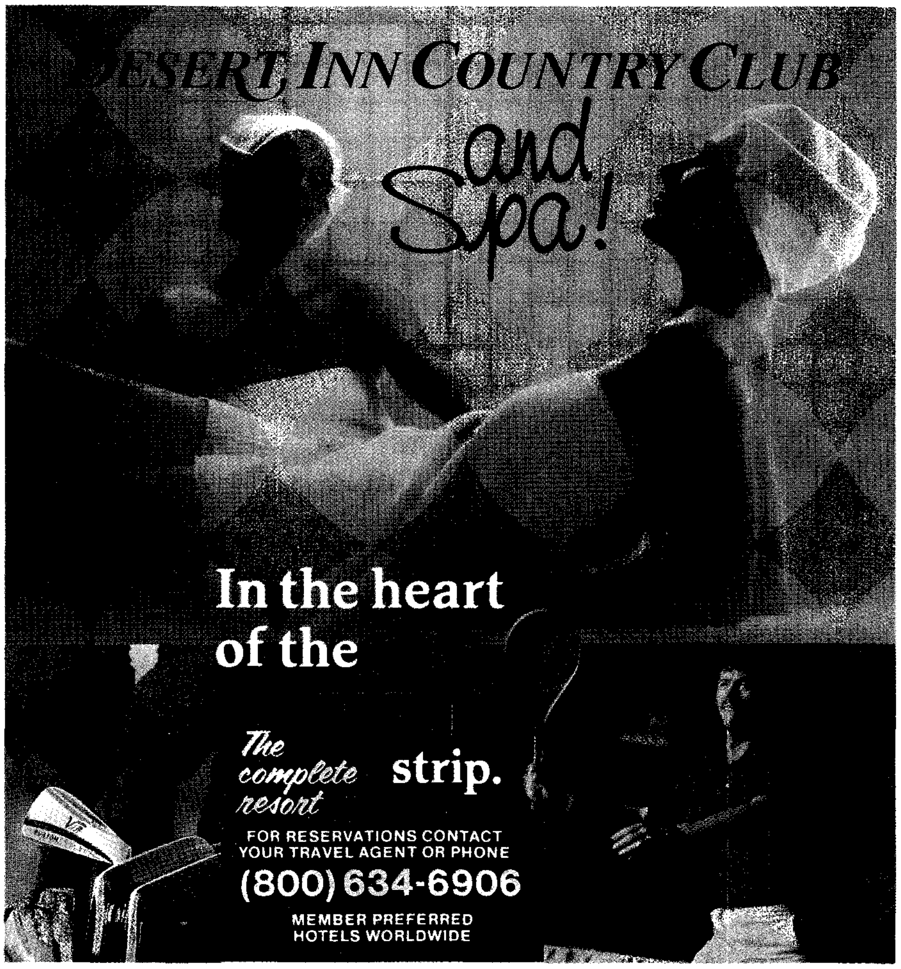
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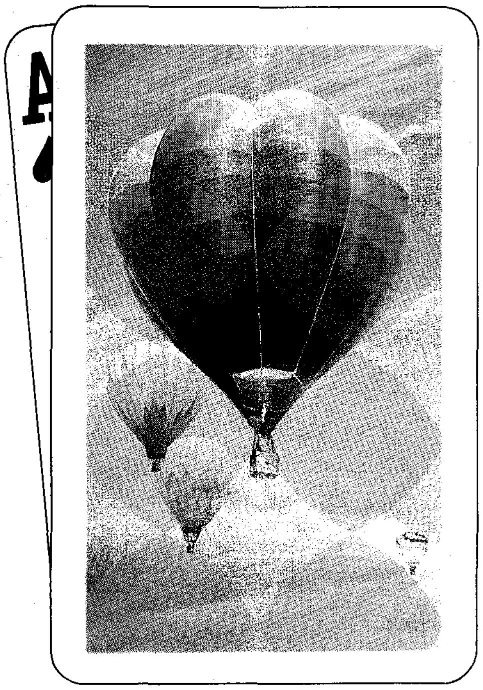

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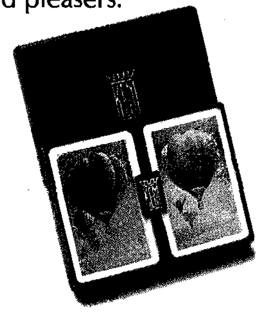

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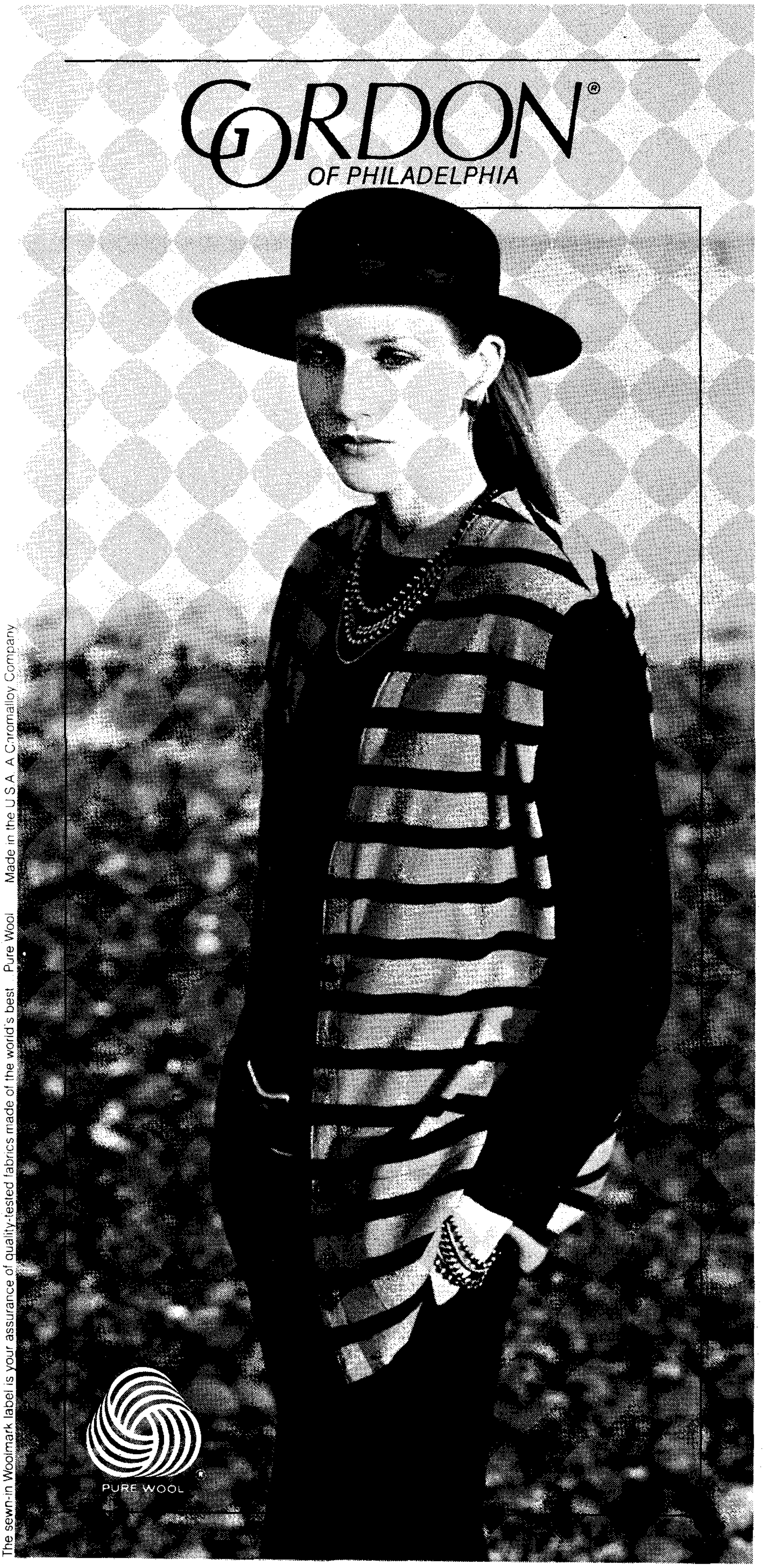
really sank in; it never really acquired any intimacy for me.

When we referred to "family," we almost invariably meant my mother's family—my two uncles (remote patriarchs accorded a near-idolatrous respect), my array of aunts (whom we respected but did not worship), and an army of first and second cousins. The ancestral past was represented by my maternal grandmother, a figure of legendary ferocity and resolution. However, I knew her only as a blind, bedridden woman ending her days in the Port of Spain house of her elder son. Whenever I went there with my mother, my grandmother would take me up onto the bed with her, call me "*beta*" (son), and, drooling endearments from her toothless mouth, lavish upon me clumsy caresses. Her flannel vests were impregnated with camphor, and she smelled strongly of the bay rum with which she liberally bathed her skin. My mother, as a gesture of daughterly submission, would apply more bay rum as they talked together in Hindi, or, if it was demanded, would massage her limbs with coconut oil. I couldn't have been more than five or six years when she died—to me she had been hardly more than an emanation of mysterious medicinal essences. I recall a gaudily ornamented open coffin placed on trestles in my uncle's sitting room and, afterward, the leaping flames and smoke rising from her funeral pyre on the banks of the Caroni River. A couple of years later, I would once more be standing on the muddy banks of the Caroni. On that occasion, I stared at the leaping flames and smoke consuming my father's body.

The breakup of the family seemed to accelerate with my grandmother's death, and was aggravated in authentic peasant style by the quarrels and jealousies that took shape round the division of the inheritance—the bulk of which, of course, passed to the two sons. But there still remained land enough and gold and silver enough to stimulate vile rancor and innuendo, quarrels that would be exacerbated in due course by the (ostensibly) political differences that developed between my two uncles, one of whom (the younger) became Leader of Trinidad's Opposition party; the other didn't. But all this lay a little in the future. For a while yet, our Hinduness, our awareness of ourselves as members of an exclusive and important clan, Brahmanical princes among the Hindu community, came to life once a year or so, when we all gathered for some days in my uncle's house (I refer to the uncle who didn't attain the Leadership of the Opposition—the one who did, during those years, was absent in England and famous on the island for his mathematical genius) and various religious rites were enacted. At any rate, these rites provided a kind of climax to the other, more earthly proceedings. I had no knowledge of the meaning or significance of these rituals. Religion, so far as it impinged on me, consisted of the protracted drone of a pundit chanting from the sacred texts a language I did not understand, the clouds of incense ascending from the flower-strewn *puja* mound, the ringing of bells, and the tuneless trumpeting of conch shells. Beyond this my comprehension did not penetrate.

What I did like was the communal coming together, that chaotic assemblage of aunts and first and second cousins under one roof; the sleeping together on the floor in the pillared space downstairs; the games of table tennis and cards and sidewalk cricket; the food—doled out on freshly washed banana leaves sparkling with droplets of water, and served at long tables—and the pots of sweet, milky tea poured into blue-rimmed enamel cups; the women cooking over wood fires in the improvised kitchen set up in the back yard, hoarsely singing *bhajans*—Hindu songs of a sacred character—as they rolled out dough and stirred caldrons of boiling rice and vegetables and lentils. At night, if the mood was conducive, the singing would be done to the accompaniment of drums. I have never seen my mother happier than she was on these occasions, her mood an unstable compound of excitability, serenity, and gaiety shared by all the aunts. They surrendered themselves body and soul to the collective entity that overwhelmed us all during those few days. The colonial-cosmopolitan world beyond my uncle's gates receded and became dim.

These interludes were my nearest approach to the past (or what I imagined the past to have been like)—to its amniotic assurance, protection, and solidarity. It was the closest I have ever come to feeling I belonged to an organism larger than myself, to having an identity accepted by myself and recognized and reinforced by others: the closest I have ever come to a *social* existence. But soon enough even these celebrations came to an end—I must have been about ten or eleven when that occurred—as loyal-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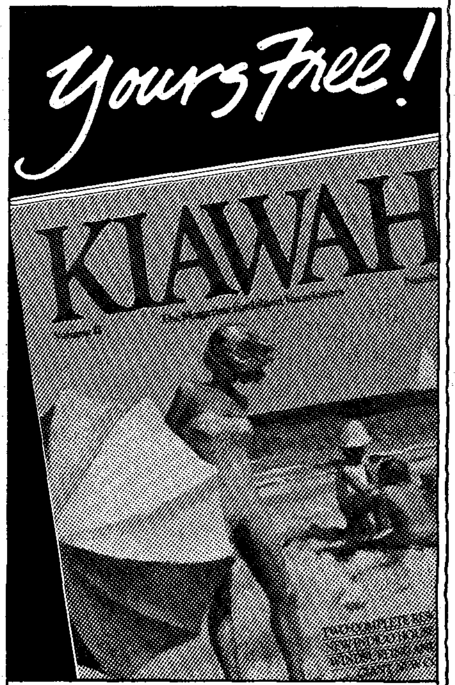

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ties frayed under stress and collapsed into open enmity between the rival factions centered on the persons of my two uncles. When these old wars did finally come to an end, there was nothing left. Gradually, imperceptibly, I lost touch with most of my aunts and cousins. Some of the former have died, gone away, or simply sunk into the futilities of old age. Nearly all my first cousins are strangers to me, the bond between us broken beyond repair. If we passed on the street, it is probable that we would fail to recognize each other. India, as represented by its ties of caste and clan and shared memory, lasted less than sixty years in Trinidad.

My mother, naturally enough, continues to worship the divinities my grandfather brought with him when he adventured across the "black water." At Divali, the Hindu festival of lights, she illuminates the house, as she has always done, with little oil-fed lamps of clay and cooks special food, which she distributes to the neighbors. Some of this food she puts out for the shade of my father. Nor does she neglect to light a lamp on behalf of each of her seven children, and she places the lamps in a semicircle under the sacred *tulsi* (basil). Her Hinduism is there for everyone to see, but it is there in a very different way from before. On the whole, I think it can be fairly said, her worship is more detached and formal. She goes to a nearby temple, with tiled floors and colorful effigies of the gods and goddesses imported from the factories of Bombay and Benares—a temple with secretaries, treasurers, and committees. For her, India, as such, has emerged into the light of day. She has visited it twice by jet plane, stayed in its five-star hotels, been cheated by its merchants, and, in keeping with her piety, made pilgrimages to the holy places. Now she talks of travelling to Alaska. For better or worse, she accepts her Trinidadianness; she knows the prehistory played out on the Caroni plains is dead and can never be revived. The turbulent cosmopolitan-colonial world has triumphed.

St. James, the western district of Port of Spain, in which I grew up, mirrored that turbulent cosmopolitanism. The area had once been a sugarcane estate, and the names of the streets—Ganges, Hyderabad, Bengal, Madras, Cawnpore, Lucknow, Bombay, Calcutta—were (I assume) the last surviving echoes of the indentured

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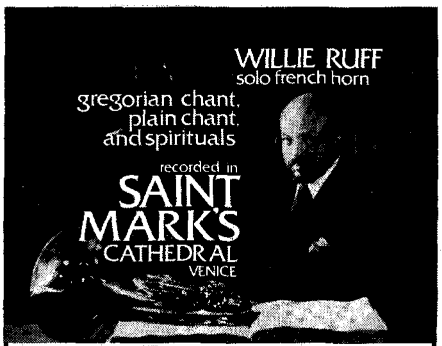

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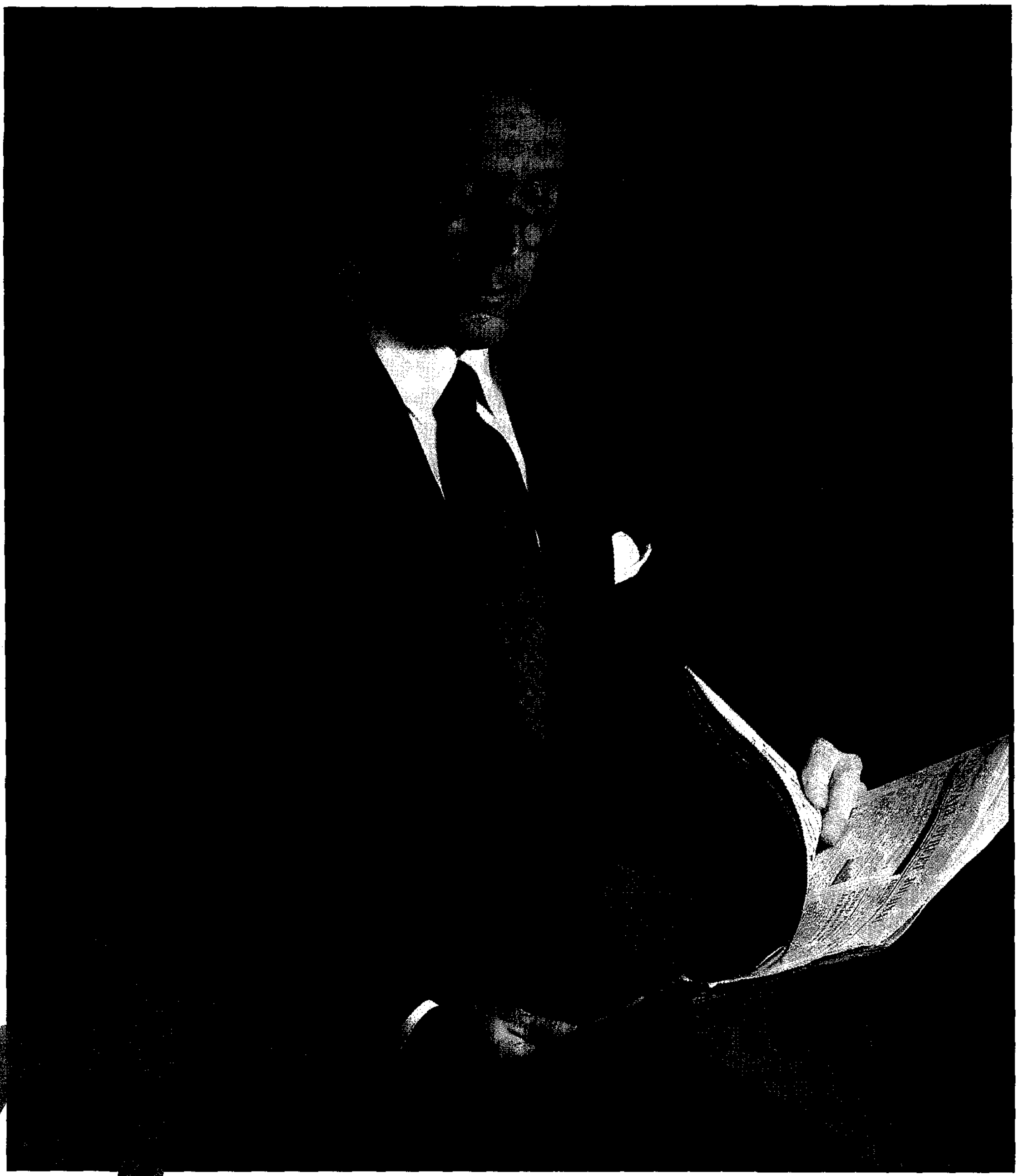

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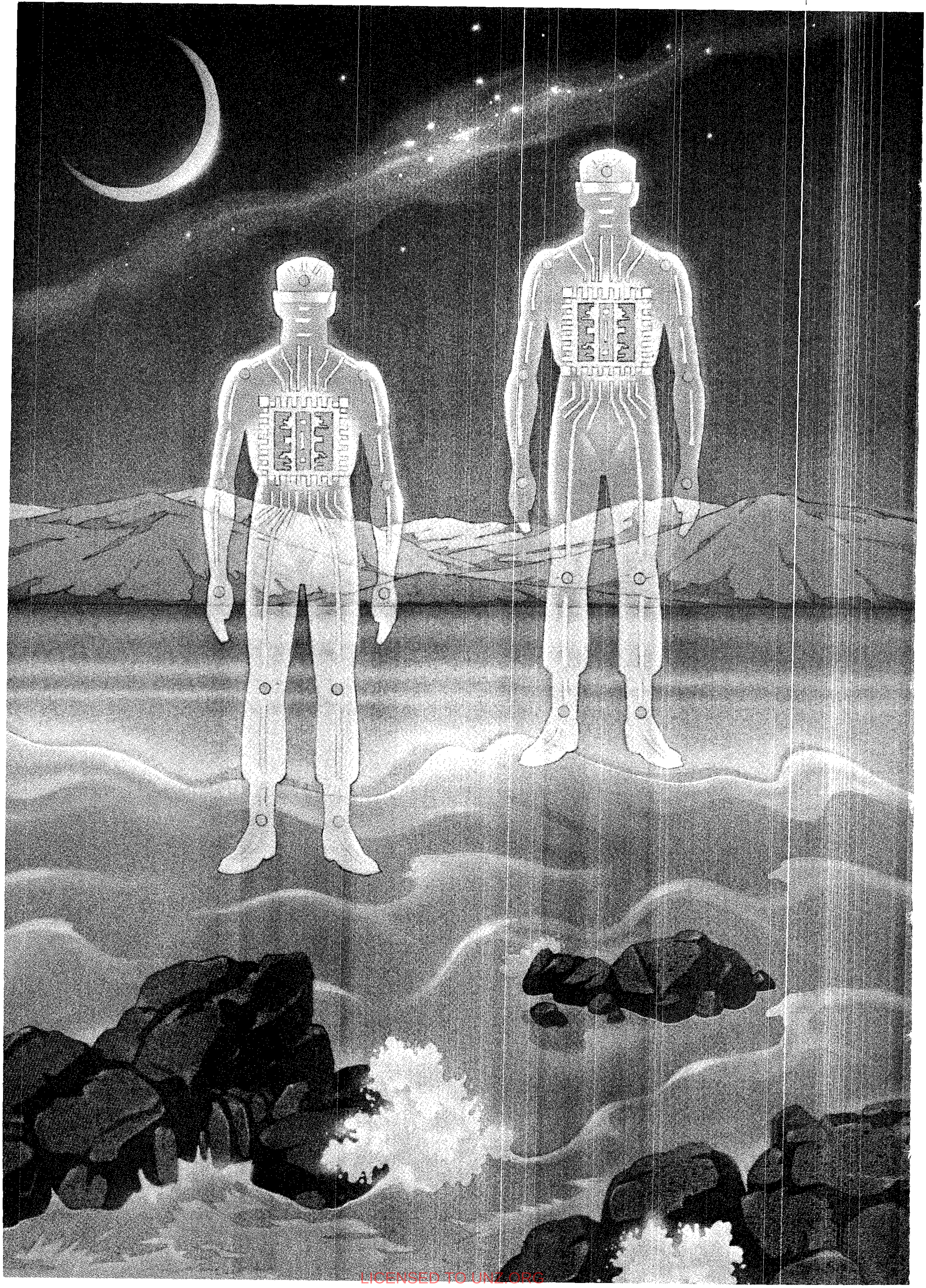

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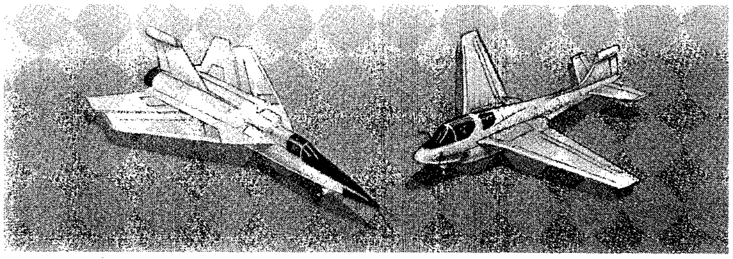

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laborers who had toiled on its soil. But long before I was born its agricultural past had been forgotten—had become, in fact, almost impossible to imagine. St. James, cut in two by the busy thoroughfare called the Western Main Road, was uncompromisingly urban, harboring a variegated population, none of whom could be classed as rich or, come to that, as desperately poor: the beggars who used to come regularly to our gate on Friday mornings were not of the locality. It was neither an especially desirable nor an especially undesirable area in which to live. If you had the money, you moved out; if you didn't, you stayed and didn't feel too hard done by. This raffish ambiguity was not without its charms.

On the Western Main Road, there were modest businesses—offering for sale bolts of cloth, random items of haberdashery and hardware, knickknacks made in Hong Kong—owned by indolent Syrians, Lebanese, and Indians. Chinese ran laundries and groceries and rum shops. The grocery favored by my mother had a Portuguese proprietor. He, however, taking fright at the prospect of Independence (we weren't able to appreciate such sentiments in those days), sold up eventually and took himself off to Madeira. The defection of the generous and kindly Mr. Cardoso filled my mother with sorrow. Elderly Negro women operated roadside stalls heaped, according to the season, with oranges and mangoes and tamarinds, as well as sickly items of homemade confectionery. Our cinema, the Rialto, fed us a steady diet of Western double features and did a decent trade. On Saturday nights, there would be good-natured brawls outside the deliberately narrow tunnel that gave access to its pit section. True to its urban character, St. James was well stocked with steel bands. However, our steelbandsmen, perhaps softened by the ambiguous nature of the environment, were not as tough or as fearsome as those who came from the more easterly parts of town; nor, as a consequence, was their music quite as good.

St. James differed in many ways from the neighboring district of Woodbrook, where my uncle lived. Woodbrook, with its quiet streets, its sprinkling of tiny squares, its neat wooden houses fronted by verandas with fretted eaves, from which were suspended orchids and ferns in wire baskets, was definitely more respectable, more desirably residential in ev-

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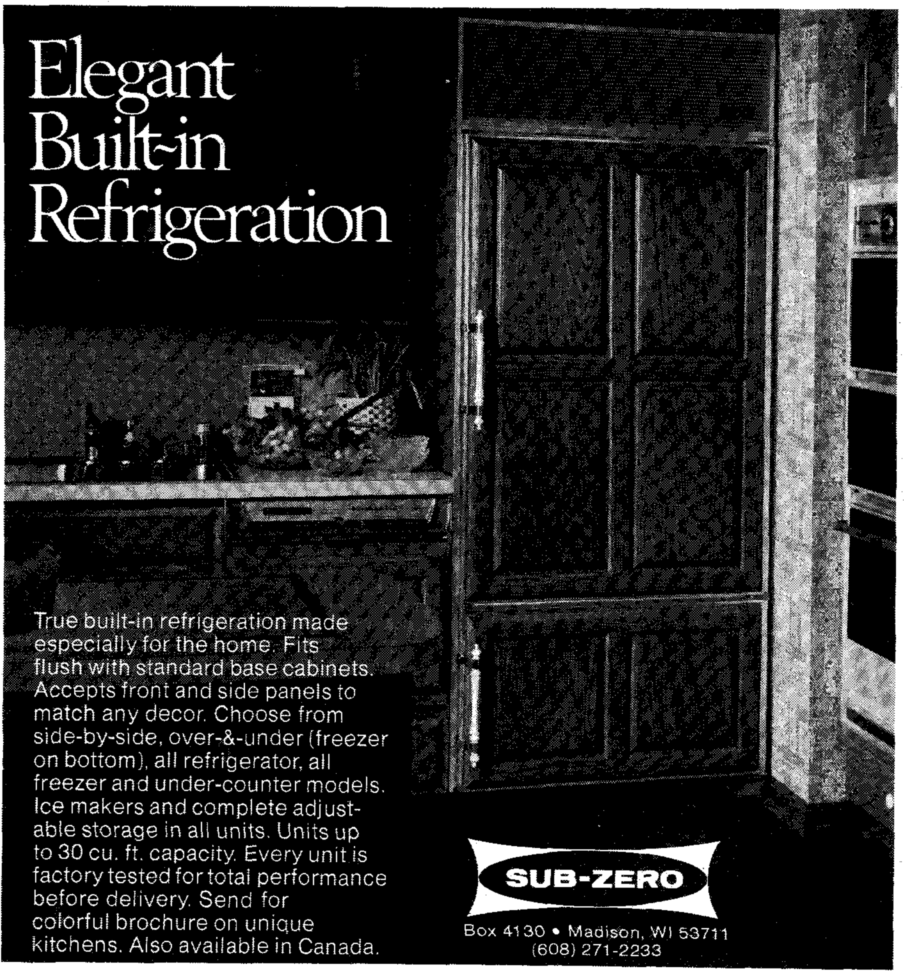

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ery way than was St. James. Lighter-skinned folk, families of clerkly status, schoolteachers—they all showed a marked preference for Woodbrook. Not surprisingly, it was also a favorite haunt of Presbyterians. There must have been more pianos per square acre in Woodbrook than in any other district of Port of Spain. (I do not believe my street in St. James could have laid claim to a single piano.) It had, predictably enough, many fewer steel bands, while the Hispanic bias of its street names—Luis, Carlos, Alberto, Cornelio, Rosalino—further emphasized its pretensions. If St. James was very different from Woodbrook, it was no less different from a district like Belmont. This last was an altogether unpleasant place. Its faults can be traced back to distant events. Many of its original inhabitants were slaves rescued from foreign ships by the crusading zeal of the British Navy after the abolition of "the Trade" in 1807. (For a while, the area was known as Freetown.) Belmont, as a result, was given to a querulous independence of spirit. In its tortuous alleys and lanes was nurtured a peculiar Africanized hubris—a sort of proto-Negritude—that was off-putting to the outsider. I hardly ever went there. My Trinidadian—the type with which I am most familiar—is the St. James-style Trinidadian: an individual eluding precise definition. And the street on which I lived—a street defying facile sociological analysis—was a typical St. James street.

Shortly after I was born (that stirring event took place—at an hour now forgotten by my mother—in my uncle's Woodbrook house, in a room unflatteringly referred to as the pantry), my father moved us to a small, box-shaped two-story house on Nepaul Street. Here I spent the first eighteen years of my life. The house, situated not far from the corner where Nepaul Street met the Western Main Road—the Rialto Cinema was a stone's throw away, on the opposite side of that artery—had the distinction of being the only two-story structure on the street. But then there were no two houses alike. Some were bungalows of plastered, painted brick, others bungalows of raw brick. Some were old-style wooden houses, with jalousied windows and fretted woodwork; others were newer-style wooden cabins, without jalousied windows and fretted woodwork. Some were little better than tumbledown shacks. The one feature possessed in common was corrugated iron roofing. It would be tempting to hazard the generalization that the quality of the architecture improved toward the Western Main Road end of the street and degenerated as you went away from it. But even that optimistic statement cannot be considered accurate. In the zone of brick, several more or less discreet pockets of dereliction were to be discovered scattered about the untidy back yards.

Nor did Nepaul Street lend itself to a quick and easy racial stereotyping. Negroes were certainly the most numerous, but they were not culturally dominant. There were (apart from us) some families of Indian ancestry to be found on the street; there were those who, depending on mood, might have described themselves as Portuguese or Creole or Colored (Trinidadians employ that term in its South African sense); and there were those of an ancestry so wonderfully confused that they were impossible to classify: our language, so subtle in these matters, could not, nevertheless, be expected to cover every eventuality. There was, let me add for the sake of completeness, a Chinese family. They remained among us for about two years, but then, having the money, they moved out. At any rate, there we all were: a completely arbitrary collection of human beings. At one extreme, picture my father, with his glass-doored bookcase lined with classical works of literature and philosophy. At the other, picture the Negro children running wild and shirtless in dusty back yards, with navels protuberant. Picture their pigtailed older sisters, maturing with startling rapidity, whose bellies would begin to swell at the age of fourteen or fifteen, as if in obedience to some inflexible law of nature. Children were easy to bear, but childhood was short in St. James. We coexisted without animosity but also without mutual comprehension; we were strangers to one another, linked by nothing except our physical proximity—by the stark, unaccountable fact of our having been washed up on the same street, one of many, many streets like it, in the capital city of a

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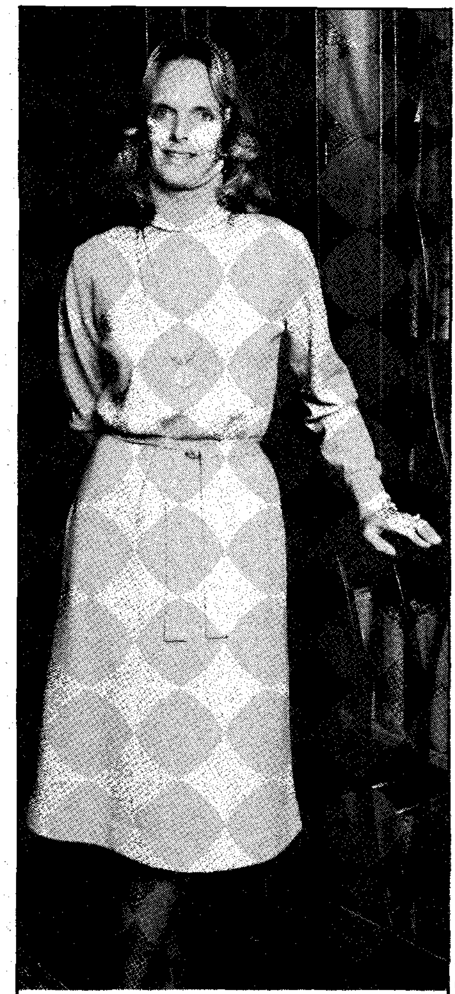

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Beyond our back fence was the spacious yard—a compound almost—in which I had had my first taste of Trinidad's pedagogic techniques. The compound was shared by an odd mixture of people. At the front, facing the Western Main Road, was a large and airy wooden bungalow with a wide veranda. It was a curiously bleak place, minimally furnished, its floorboards bare and unpolished. When I think of it, I see cheap lace curtains fluttering in the breezes that rushed through its wide-open doors and windows. Here lived a tense and pale Indian jeweller, his plump, fecund wife, and their numerous progeny. My family's attitude toward them was reasonably amiable but distant, my mother's attitude being tinged with faint traces of a hauteur verging on suspicion. It is interesting that my mother—fascinated, like all Indians, by jewelry—never called on the jeweller's skills. It was as if she did not entirely trust the family's credentials. Never, or hardly ever, did they come to our house. However, no objection was raised to my going over to them and amusing myself with the younger sons of the family. They were, as it happened, the only playmates I ever had in the immediate vicinity, even though Nepaul Street, it goes virtually without saying, teemed with children. But it was assumed both by these urchins (denizens of the yards at the less salubrious end of the street) and by me that no friendship could arise between us. Subsequent events seem to have justified my mother's unspoken misgivings.

In the nether regions of the compound, beyond the jeweller's house, was a barrackslike building whose dark, stifling rooms were rented out to a vagrant tenantry—women without men, children without fathers, men without women, who slept drunkenly through the day, emerging from their dens at twilight to roam the Western Main Road. The portion of the barracks nearest us—the building extended to within a few feet of our back fence—was occupied by a wild-looking woman of indeterminate age and racial composition, who had with her a copper-skinned girl of negroid feature. Mahalia (as the child was named) was, I imagine, about five years older than I was. They may or may not have been mother and daughter. The precise relationship between them never became clear to me. However it was, the woman exercised all the sinewy rights of guardianship over

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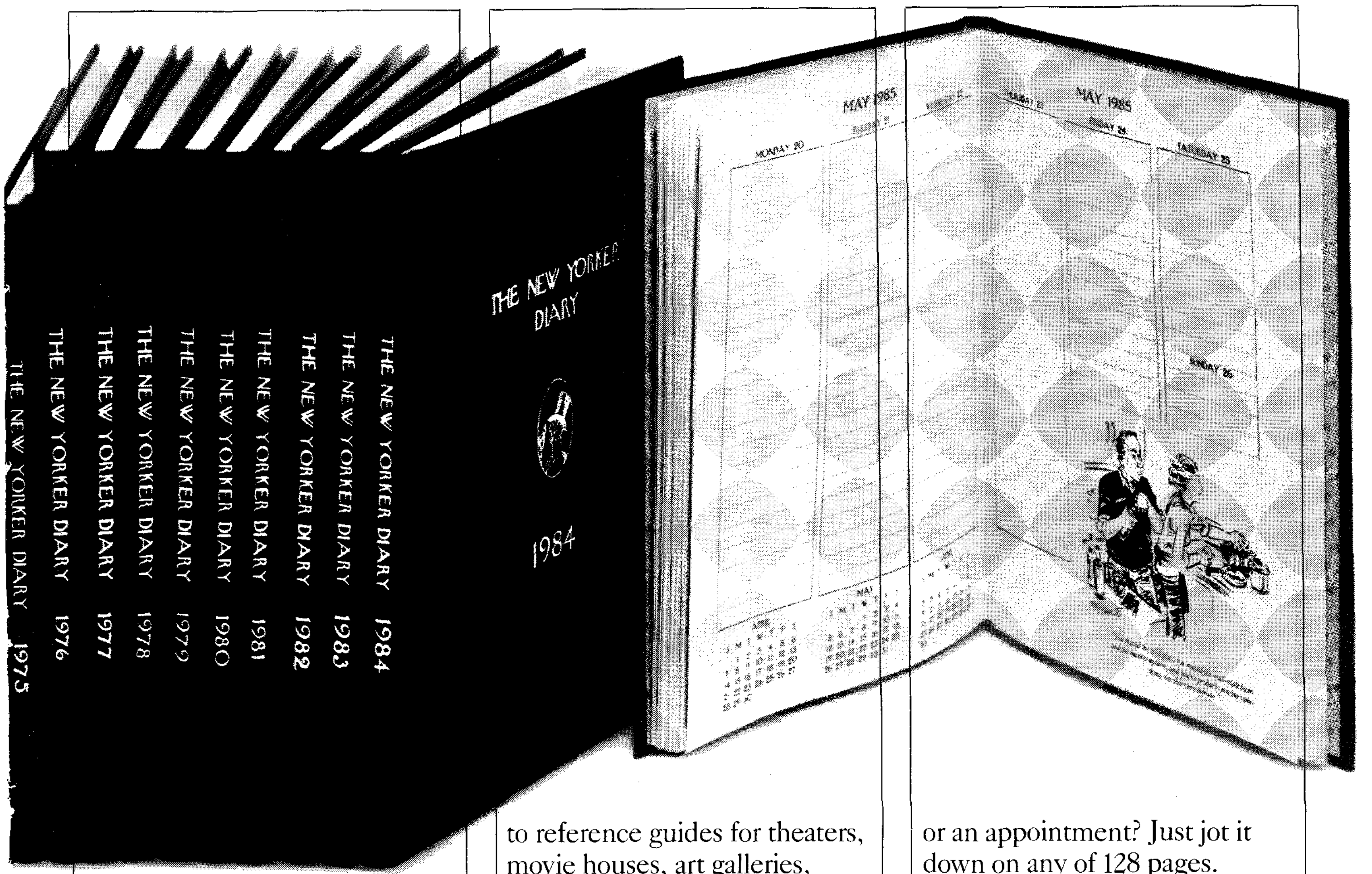
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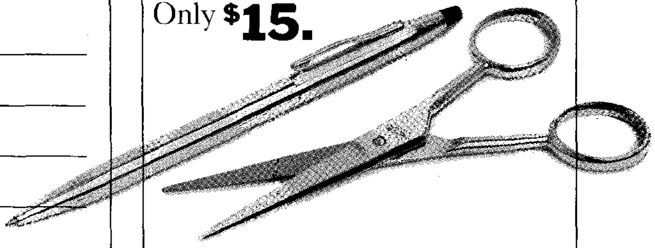

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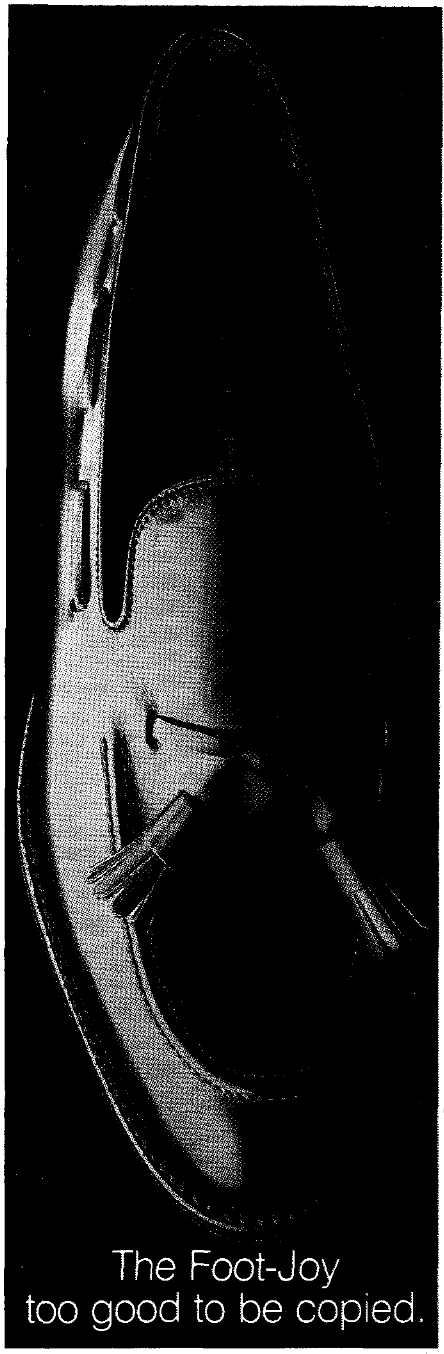
the child, who most days would be mercilessly beaten. I grew up with the sounds of Mahalia's frenzied wailing and sobbing, accompanied by the orgiastic howl of her mother's stampeding rage as she chased her up and down the black-earthed compound. It is doubtful whether Mahalia ever went to school. Daily, I would see her walking to and from the standpipe, swaying under the weight of the bucket of water she carried on her head; I would see her diligently sprinkling and then sweeping their portion of yard; I would watch her fanning the coal pot put out on the steps leading to their room: between beatings, Mahalia was a lively and energetic child. There were even moments of simian tenderness between mother and daughter, when the former would cradle Mahalia's head on her lap and deftly comb through it and pick out the lice.

If their relationship was obscure, no less so were their means of support. My mother had convinced herself—and me—that the woman was an adept in the black arts of Obeah, her diabolical aptitudes freeing her from conventional necessities. The Devil, like God, looked after his own. She may have been right. Certainly the woman, inky locks of hair curling into ringlets, kohl-blackened eyes sunk deep in her feral face, looked the part. And there were inexplicable goings on. Now and again, I would hear incantatory invocations issuing through the open windows of the room; now and again we would come upon garlands of faded flowers lying on our side of the fence. These objects roused all my mother's superstitious terrors, though it was never explained why the evil creature should want to harm us. Taking care not to let these unsolicited offerings come into contact with her flesh, my mother would lever them back over the fence. The usual response to these acts of defiance was explosions of raucous merriment, in which—sometimes—the brutalized Mahalia shared. This war between the powers of light and darkness was waged over several years. My mother, I am sure, would claim that the ultimate victory was hers. I keep an open mind.

Alas, St. James was St. James—a brute reality that not even the dark angels of Obeah could dispel. When Mahalia was about fifteen, her belly began to betray telltale signs of distension. The beatings that followed were among the most terrible that I can remember. Day after day, Maha-



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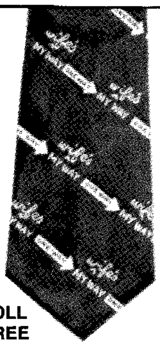

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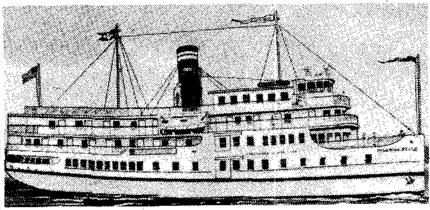

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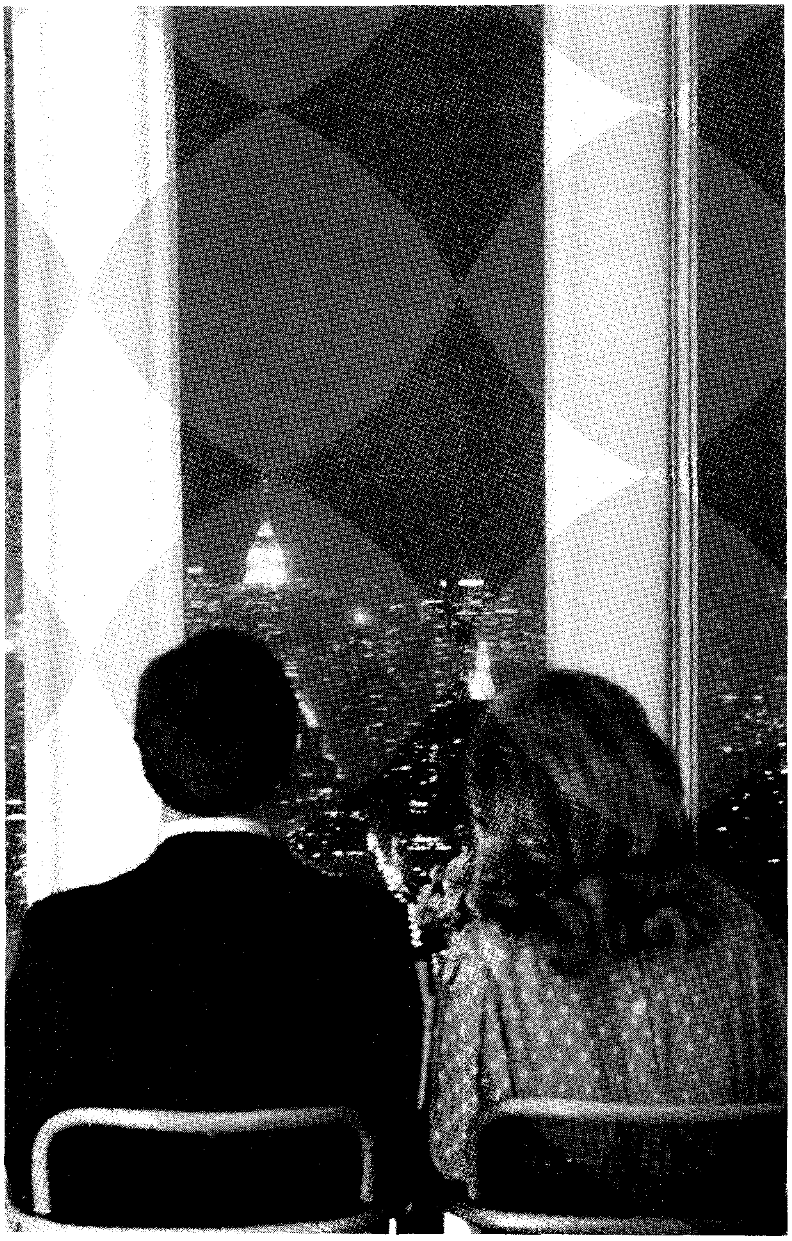

It was his idea.

Maybe he wanted to show her he'd become a New York insider. And maybe he wanted to give her a bit of the old razzle dazzle, too. So they set a date for dinner at Windows on the World.

It was a little stiff at first, even though she was duly impressed with the gracious feeling of the place and the look of the people who were there.

He began to loosen up when he got the chance to show off his knowledge of wines as he selected from the 641 they have on the Wine List at Windows.

It took her a little longer – in fact, she didn't relax at all until they started looking down from 107 stories up and picking out old haunts. They spotted the block in The Village where they rented their first studio apartment. And they came close to picking out 285 Madison Ave. where he had his first job, in the messenger room. They even found the spot at the South Street Seaport where they had such a ridiculous argument on Tall Ships Day.

They reminisced a lot about the exciting things they used to do. Everything seemed elegant and, somehow, more civilized than it had been in a long time. Even New York itself seemed more like the city they had fallen in love with years ago.

The evening was over before they knew it. And they never did get around to discussing the alimony. So they've set another date for dinner at Windows on the World for November 14.

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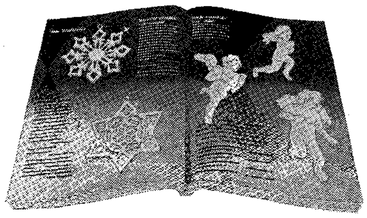

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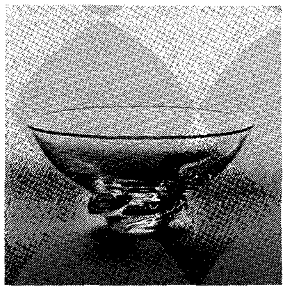

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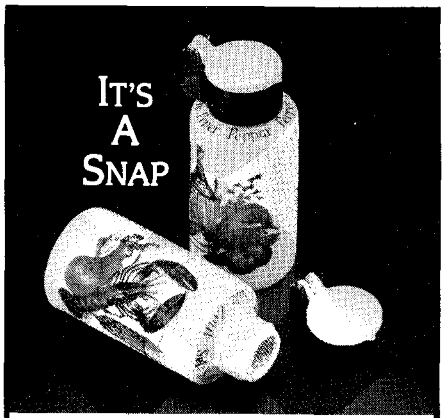
lia raced about the compound, pursued by her hysterical mother. "I going to murder you! I going to chop off your hands and foot! Chop up that thing you have growing inside of you! I don't care if they hang me!" Then, quite suddenly, from one day to the next, the beatings stopped. A weird and unprecedented quiet descended upon the barracks—the dazed tranquillity, one may surmise, of exhaustion and despairing fatalism. The transformation was uncanny. Mahalia, now displaying a slatternly serenity, resumed the round of her domestic duties. She sprinkled and swept the yard, swayed under the buckets of water she carried from the standpipe, fanned the flames of the coal pot. Once a week or so, she would have her hair combed and the lice plucked out. Her mother, sunk in lethargy, would sit out on the steps looking at her or wander about the compound singing to herself. I heard no sombre incantations floating out from the windows of the room; no faded garlands appeared on our side of the fence. She even tried to address a few civil words to my mother, to enlist her sympathy about the waywardness of girl children. My mother, who had five of her own, was not responsive. The baby was born. Mahalia, a woman now, neglected her domestic tasks and did as she pleased, consigning the child to its grandmother. "Mahalia running wild," I heard her complain to one of the neighbors. "She must have a man on every street in St. James." All the same, she seemed devoted to the baby's welfare, bathing it, feeding it from a discarded beer bottle, rocking it to sleep on her shoulder, weeping over it as, instinctively, she searched its head for lice: it must have been the only gesture of tenderness she knew. One day, Mahalia appeared with a man—who may or may not have been the child's father. They took the baby and went away. It was the last time I saw Mahalia. Solitude brought with it a halfhearted revival of the old ways. The incantations started up again, and more garlands were tossed over the fence. But the dread they used to inspire had evaporated; their power had been broken. During those months of solitude and halfhearted witchery, Mahalia's mother looked wilder and more dishevelled than ever, shrinking into a meagre parody of her old self, and within a few months she, too, vanished. "I going to look for Mahalia," she said. We never saw her again.



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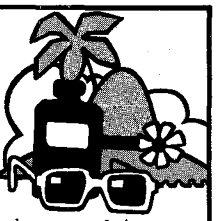

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The malign star haunting the compound reached out to embrace the jeweller and his family. On visits to the house, I would hear his normally placid wife sobbing in a bedroom. A horrible change had come over the jeweller. His air of pale tension, of recession from his surroundings, had gradually intensified. He would sit out on the veranda, staring at the traffic on the Western Main Road, his light-brown eyes filmed with lustrous vacancy. Sometimes he would look at me and not seem to recognize who I was. His children appeared to be frightened by him and avoided his presence. They were withdrawn and did not want to play. I began to keep away. There were rumors of wife beating, and worse: it was bruited about that the jeweller was insane. Among us, the mad did not arouse compassion but, rather, evoked the most primitive fears. At some subconscious level, we must all have sensed how perilously close we were to dissolution. I stopped going there altogether. The situation deteriorated. Occasionally, agonized wails floated across the compound, and I would hear the sounds of breaking glass, the crash of furniture being hurled about. A climax of sorts was attained when one of the older boys set upon his father and beat him up, then fled from the house with his mother and the younger children. The family disintegrated. Soon the house was completely abandoned. They, too, had disappeared forever from our lives. I would experience a shiver of disturbance whenever I passed by the house and saw its empty veranda, its shattered windows, and its useless lace curtains fluttering in the breeze. After a time, the house was pulled down, and, St. James being St. James, a rum shop was built on the site. The barracks, too, was demolished. In its place came a two-story house. Here the owner of the rum shop installed a number of women—a lewd, languorous, bosomy harem—who may or may not have been his mistresses. Their protector, a choleric man devoted to his trade, fell periodically into a drunken ferment of jealousy and suspicion. He would appear among them, a red-eyed, half-naked apparition waving a cutlass. "I going to chop all of you! You hear me? I come to chop up all of you today." The women flapped and squawked like panic-stricken fowls. This happened about twice a month. The compound remained an enclave of disrepute.

If we regarded the jeweller and his

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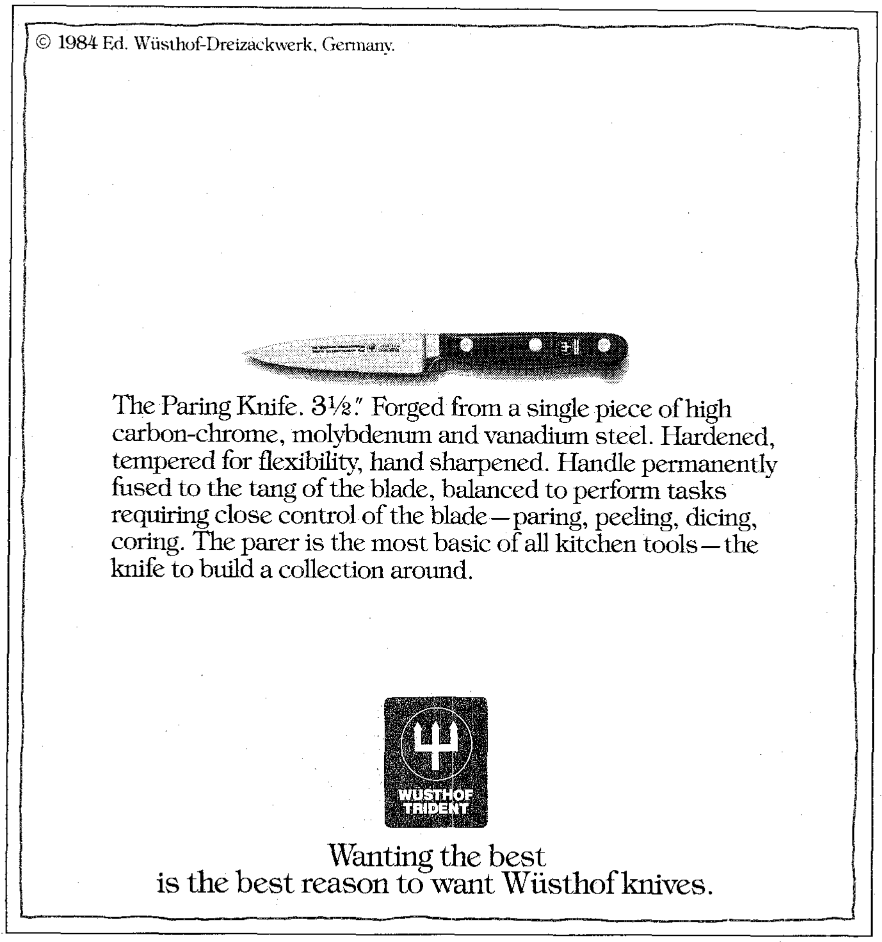
family warily—withholding, as it were, full communion—this was even more the case with the family next door. Outwardly, they looked Indian. With that, all resemblance between them and us ended. They represented an extreme of deracination, of vacuity, which still fascinates me. They were, I would guess, vaguely Christian—but of precisely which variety it is not easy to say. The act of conversion had left them culturally shipwrecked. It is highly improbable that they were Presbyterian. If that had been so, there would have been a piano in the house, and they would have assiduously educated themselves. Their aspirations—they had few I could discern—were, at best, muddy, fluctuating, and modestly pitched. They seemed to me to subsist within a bubble of inanity: to have come from nowhere in particular, to belong to nothing in particular (they lacked even the crudest racial self-definition), and to be going nowhere in particular. Their emptiness expressed itself in peculiar ways. Old Mr. S. was said not to have exchanged a word with his wife for uncounted years. The original cause of their silence—if there was any such specific event—had long been forgotten, had long ceased to matter. From one day to the next, they had simply stopped talking to each other. Petulance had hardened into loveless habit and become a way of life. Maybe they had come to the bleak realization that they had nothing to talk about. Indeed, the state of conversation in that house was altogether perilous. You could never be sure who was talking or not talking to whom. For no apparent reason, the daughter would stop talking to her mother for months on end; and—again for no apparent reason—she would suddenly resume normal communication. Shifting allegiance, she would then stop talking to her father. There were interludes when she talked to neither. The sons were prey to the same malady. They exhausted every conceivable permutation of talking and not talking to each other, to their sister, and to their mother and father. To know the exact state of affairs in the household at any given moment was almost impossible. Sometimes, communication seizing up completely, a shrouding silence would envelop the household. To compensate for this, someone would play the radio at its loudest volume, so banishing the funereal silence. These alternating tides of sociability and reticence could be extended to their neighbors. Inex-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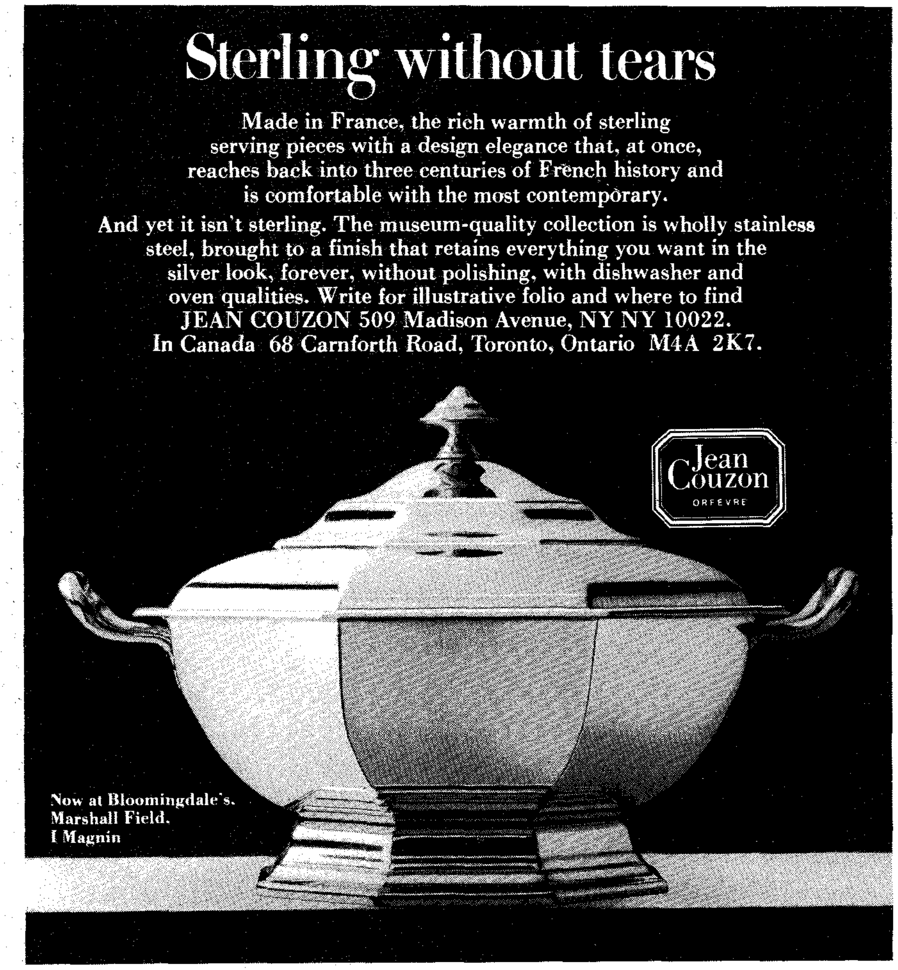
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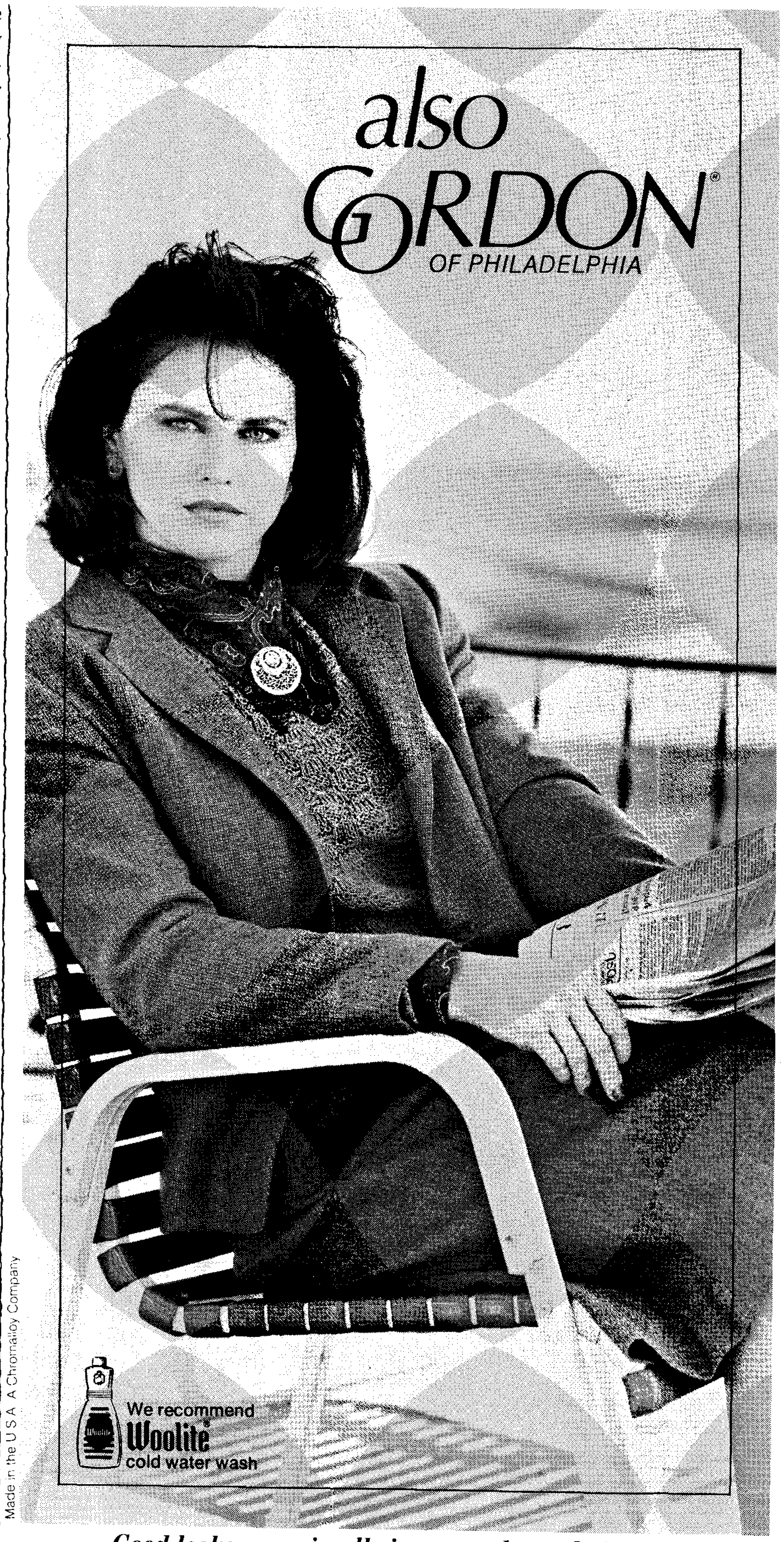
plicably, the daughter or one of the sons would refuse to acknowledge my mother's greetings. One of these numerous cold wars—with the daughter—lasted for several years.

Old Mr. S. when I came to know him was already an invalid—a mild-mannered, slow-moving, yellow-skinned man. Mornings and afternoons, dressed in striped pajamas, he would sit on the little veranda at the front of the house, staring out at the street with rheumy eyes. When he saw me playing in our yard, he might wave and smile. After a fashion, he tried to be nice to me. Now and again, he would call me over to him and, amazingly enough, endeavor to talk. Once—rather to my surprise—he concocted a telephone out of two tin cans joined by a piece of string. Another time, he showed me how to make a kite. "When I was a boy," he confided joylessly, "I used to fly a lot of kite." It was the only item of autobiographical information he ever allowed himself. Most days, however, he didn't call me over to him and didn't bother to smile or wave. Shoulders hunched, he would just sit there on the sunstruck square of veranda, looking out blankly at the street, waiting for death. He may have had a story to tell—we are all supposed to have a story to tell. It is terrible to suspect that his life was so void of passion and interest and meaning he may not have had one.

As for Mrs. S., who had not been talked to by her husband for uncounted years, she was indistinguishable from a domestic servant. I have a fixed image of her wandering about the yard barefooted (the soles of her weathered feet were incised by intricate networks of cracks and fissures), a kerchief wrapped round her head, clucking at the fowls and turkeys she kept, scattering feed and scraps of stale bread. I see her, too, picking up the rotting breadfruit fallen from the impressive tree that grew in the yard. That breadfruit tree was one of the landmarks of our street. It was, in addition, a source of friction. My mother felt—and she may have been justified—that its roots were undermining the fence and threatening to irrupt through the floor of the sitting room. Be that as it may, the breadfruit tree was for us an undeniable and unprofitable nuisance. Its upper branches overhung our roof. At night, we would be startled awake by the thunder of overripe breadfruit crashing down on the corrugated iron. My



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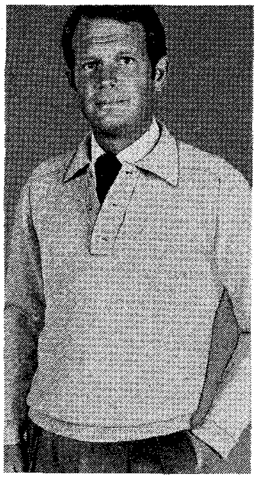

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mother also objected to the debris that littered our yard and, not infrequently, blocked our drains. All of these irritations were aggravated by our neighbor's miserliness: seldom were we given a breadfruit. On occasion, my mother would murmur darkly about pouring poison on the roots of the tree, but, not being a malicious woman, she never did perform the deed. It is possible that the tensions and bad blood provoked by the breadfruit tree may have accounted, in part, for some of the cold wars waged against us.

Mrs. S. never went anywhere and seemed to have no friends or diversions. She bore her enslavement without complaint, never betraying any signs of rancor. Whatever emotions she might once have possessed had been strangled. Her physical appearance altered little over the years—one had the impression that she had been born old, overworked, and neglected; that she had emerged from some anonymous womb with a kerchief tied round her head. If I could not convincingly portray to myself old Mr. S. flying kites in his boyhood, neither could I portray to myself the youthful desires and agitations of this unloved, blighted, and abandoned creature. Her husband's death—that long-expected and passionless event took place not many weeks after he made me the kite—wrought no changes in her life. The nothingness within which she was imprisoned was beyond the reach of alteration or mitigation. She continued to do as she had always done, to be what she had long since become. When last I saw her, some five years ago, she was still wandering about the yard in bare feet, her head wrapped in a kerchief, clucking at the fowls and ducks (the turkeys had disappeared). In the interval, the old breadfruit tree had died a natural death and been replaced by another, equally vigorous specimen—the upstart, I was glad to see, had established itself in a less contentious area of the yard. Breadfruit no longer thundered onto our corrugated iron roof, and its roots posed no threat to the floor of our sitting room. "You gone and grow into a man," Mrs. S. said to me. (I had had to reintroduce myself, because she did not recognize me.) My adulthood appeared to surprise her. As she looked at me, her faded eyes dimmed with reflective wonder. "I remember you so high." She smiled emptily, gesturing toward her knees. We had nothing else to say to each other. In a moment, she had turned away from me and

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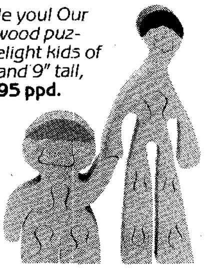

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started clucking at the fowls and ducks.

On the same visit, I saw Claudette again. She was a near relation of the S. household—as usual, the exact nature of the connection eluded me—and for a time had lived with them. Claudette was roughly the same age as Mahalia. Her hair was long and black and curling, her hips were robust, and on her downy upper lip there would sparkle, whenever she was excited and intent, tiny beads of sweat. Claudette had been one of the acknowledged belles of the neighborhood, the pride of our street. She was sociable, laughed a lot, and, as she entered her teens, took to dressing herself with a stylish insouciance. She would wear shorts and tight jerseys of alluring stripe and was one of the first to appear in pedal pushers. She was a flagship of high fashion. In the afternoons, she would display herself on the veranda where, years before, old Mr. S. had drifted to extinction. As she rocked there, she read much-handled copies of cheap English and American magazines, nourishing herself on the romances they purveyed. She was judged a bit too fast for her own good, and was suspected of having notions unsuited to her station. Her reputation never diminished my liking for her. "It have too much envious people in this world," Claudette remarked to me, pursing up her lips—for a spell she treated me as something of a confidant.

Doubtless it had to happen. Obeah had not been able to protect Mahalia, and neither did her modishness and romantic fictions protect Claudette. Not many months after Mahalia disappeared from our midst, I noticed that Claudette's belly had begun to swell. She said, laughing at me from the other side of the fence, "What you looking at so, boy?" and, persisting in her laughter, caressed the rotundity. She told me she was madly in love, and described her boyfriend as tall, dark, and handsome. "A real saga boy," she said, giggling. (We used to call fancy men "saga boys.") She hadn't read all those magazines in vain: they came to her rescue, giving her a vocabulary and a way of interpreting herself. Not for Claudette the fleeting consummations of the back alleys. She took to reading magazines with photographs of rosy-cheeked brides. "I planning to get married in white," she said. The expression "in white" was new to me, but I nodded knowledgeably. "Claudette is going to get married in white," I informed my mother. She

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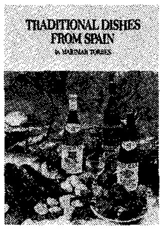

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shrugged away the revelation with a puzzled frown and advised me not to stick my nose in other people's business. Whether or not Claudette had her wish I can no longer recall. If she did, it didn't do her much good. Black would have been a more prophetic color. Long before I left Trinidad, I had begun to hear tales of her husband's drunkenness, his beatings, and his infidelities. She had moved to another street, and I saw her rarely. She had become one more harassed woman, and I was, after all, still only a boy. Now, after an absence of ten years, I was seeing her again. She lived with her children in one small room. When I met her, a white kerchief was wrapped round her head. She had, I already knew, discovered the consolations of religion, and become a member of a sect that encouraged frenzied devotional exercises. Her looks had gone to seed, though it was still possible to detect vestiges of her girlish beauty. "We all have to accept the will of God," Claudette said to me, pointing at the sky. "I am the Bride of Christ now." Pious bric-a-brac cluttered the tiny room. She reminded me that during all those years of suffering and betrayal she had remained loyal to her seducer. "It is God's will," she repeated. As she talked, beads of sweat began to sparkle on the downy upper lip of the Bride of Christ. I left her scattering feed and scraps of bread to her fowls, clucking her tongue at them. She had found another vocabulary, another way of interpreting herself and her fate.

There were three business enterprises on our street—or four if you counted the donkey-drawn coconut cart that arrived each afternoon and parked on the corner. In those days, our sidewalks, unlike Woodbrook's, weren't paved, and the donkey, braying and snorting, grazed at will on the rough pasturage. The sour-sweet reek of its urine and droppings permanently tainted the air. The wire fence to which the donkey was usually tethered—the pasturage in the vicinity, fertilized as it was by the animal, tended to be rich and varied—enclosed the premises of a "book center." This curious enterprise, so out of keeping with the character of the locality, did next to no business. On its shelves were soiled, superseded textbooks and a rag-bag collection of books on improbable subjects—soil erosion, librarianship, numismatics. It stocked piles of tattered comic books (some of those did get sold), copies of *Time*, *Newsweek*,

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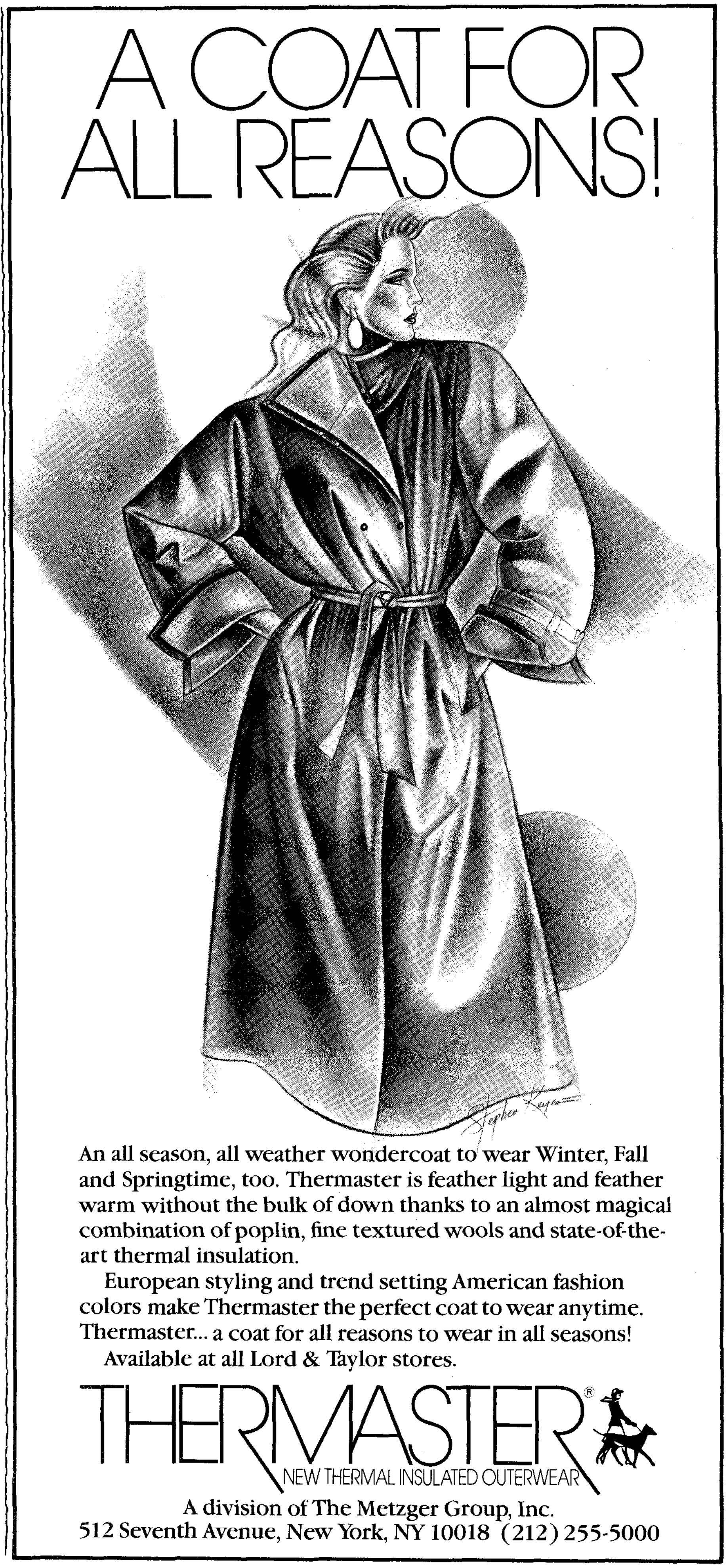
Reader's Digest, and *National Geographic* that were years out of date; and there was also a leavening of softly pornographic material. In a glass case were displayed hardened erasers, bottles of dehydrated ink, and cheap dip pens with rusting nibs. It was run by a languid, semiliterate Negro with bulbous eyes, who as the day progressed collapsed into sedate inebriation. I do not believe that any fresh items were ever added to the stock. Claudette, I assume, must have acquired many of her magazines from this source.

A Muslim family lived on the corner opposite the book center. Our relations with them tended to be less than cordial: my mother has always found it hard to forgive the Muslims for their numerous invasions of India and for forcing the partition of the subcontinent. I am not sure that our Muslim neighbors, much preoccupied with the little flock of goats they kept in their back yard, were fully aware of the complex amalgam of historical, cultural, and theological resentments directed at them from our house. We were all taken aback when, without any kind of warning, they opened a *roti* shop on their veranda. Later, the enterprise being successful (it was admirably suited to the character of St. James), a red-and-yellow neon sign appeared on their roof. One day, being in a venturesome mood, I bought one of their *rotis*. My mother, discovering this, stared at me with a shudder of distaste bordering on revulsion. I took care not to repeat the mistake.

The third business enterprise was perhaps the most singular. It was sited in the Creolized middle reaches of the street—a comparatively unknown territory, harboring pockets of uneasy and careful respectability in its brick bungalows. Here, in a tiny wooden hut shaded by a tamarind tree, was a shoe-repair service. The shoemaker (so he called himself and so we called him) aroused our curiosity and our respect. I liked the exotic atmosphere of the hut, with its oddly shaped anvils, its antique tobacco tins filled with tacks and tiny nails, its pots of paste and sheets of virgin leather. The shoemaker, sitting on his workbench, tacks clamped between his teeth, head cocked appraisingly as he examined some worn-out sole, was himself an exotic sight in his sturdy black boots, khaki trousers, khaki shirt, and pith helmet. Taken by himself, he would have been a comprehensible—if slightly enigmatic—figure. Taken to-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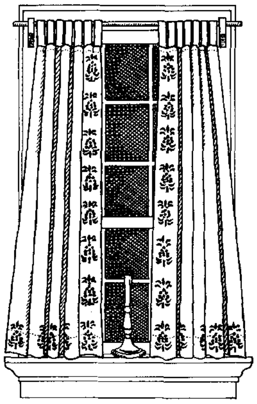

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gether with his family, he became a man of mystery. The shoemaker was undeniably black. His wife and children, on the other hand, were fair-complexioned. You could tell at a glance that mother and daughter and sons had a distinct kind of class—a class that, by definition, excluded the shoemaker. The daughter had the carriage and the intimidating mannerisms we associated with secretaries. You could easily imagine her sitting behind a desk in a fashionable doctor's or dentist's office polishing her nails all day. The more impudent street boys—" 'rabs" we called them—did not hesitate to wolf-whistle at Claudette. It would not have occurred to them to do the same to the shoemaker's daughter. Her class automatically exempted her from their lust. It was obvious that the shoemaker had no place in that milieu. Sitting all day in his hut among the rotting heaps of old shoes, he gradually began to exude the musty air of a man unloved, unregarded, and neglected. His fall provided one of the more disturbing and frightening spectacles of my childhood. It goes on haunting me. From our yard or an upstairs window, I would watch his unsteady progress along the street: I would watch him, deranged with rum, clutch at the lampposts and fences for support; I would watch the stains of urine soak through and spread down his khaki trousers as he lost control of himself; I would watch as he stumbled and fell and lay supine on the roadway, alternately laughing and weeping as he gazed up at the sky. His family's neglect degenerated into abandonment. His ruin was the most terrible of the dramas to unfold on our street.

The shoemaker's hut (it was pulled down years ago, but life does have its genuine ironies: today, not many yards away is a modern workshop turning out what it describes as footwear) was in border country. Beyond it began that region of the street where the dusty yards were overrun with pot-bellied Negro children, unmarried mothers, and would-be steel-bandsmen. It was out of one of these yards that Cora (so I shall call her), a girl not yet adolescent, came to us—gifted away, it could be said, by her varicose-veined mother, who earned a desultory living as a washerwoman. Purple-black and fine-featured, Cora was a strong, handsome, and clear-eyed girl. We grew attached to her, and she became—insofar as that was possible—an honorary member of our household. But Cora, however much

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we might cherish her, was of the street, and we were powerless to prevent her going the way of the street. She must have barely turned sixteen when I first noticed the man on the bicycle. He came every afternoon to our gate, and there, camouflaged by the poinsettia, they did their courting, talking in whispers and laughing softly. It was not long before Cora's belly started to swell. The familiar ritual was duly acted out. Her mother arrived, chased her around the house, and beat her over the shoulders with a broom. Then, in the time-honored fashion, there came calm and reconciliation. Cora's mother offered us another of her daughters as a replacement. In the ensuing years, Cora had more babies by (I believe) the same man. But he stubbornly refused to marry her. In the end, like Claudette, she was to embrace the consolations of religion. Dressed in a white gown and white turban, she is to be seen standing on street corners banging a tambourine, summoning the sinners of St. James to repentance.

A street, one of many, many streets like it, in the capital city of a distant outpost of the British Empire. On this street, my father died (he was only forty-nine) when I was seven years old. That day, I had gone with my mother to my uncle's house in Woodbrook. We were there when the news was brought to us that my father was desperately ill. Stupefied, stricken with remorse, I remembered how he had smiled and shaken his head at me as we were leaving the house—he was gardening at the time, examining the stalks of some anthuriums. "Why don't you stay with your father for a change?" he had asked, looking up at me. "Your *mamoo* [uncle] can look after himself!" He winked conspiratorially at me. But I had not stayed to keep him company. Rushing back, we saw him stretched out in one of the upstairs bedrooms, lying on the pink counterpane he and my mother had bought one rainy Christmas Eve. A trickle of spittle dripped from the corner of his mouth. I didn't know it then, but he was already dead. Another Nepaul Street tragedy had been enacted. There were steady breezes that afternoon from the hills of the Northern Range, and the curtains billowed and flapped in the small bedroom. I knew so little about this man who in the unpropitious soil of St. James had tried to make a garden—had grown carnations and orchids, had grafted roses, had planted trees. In

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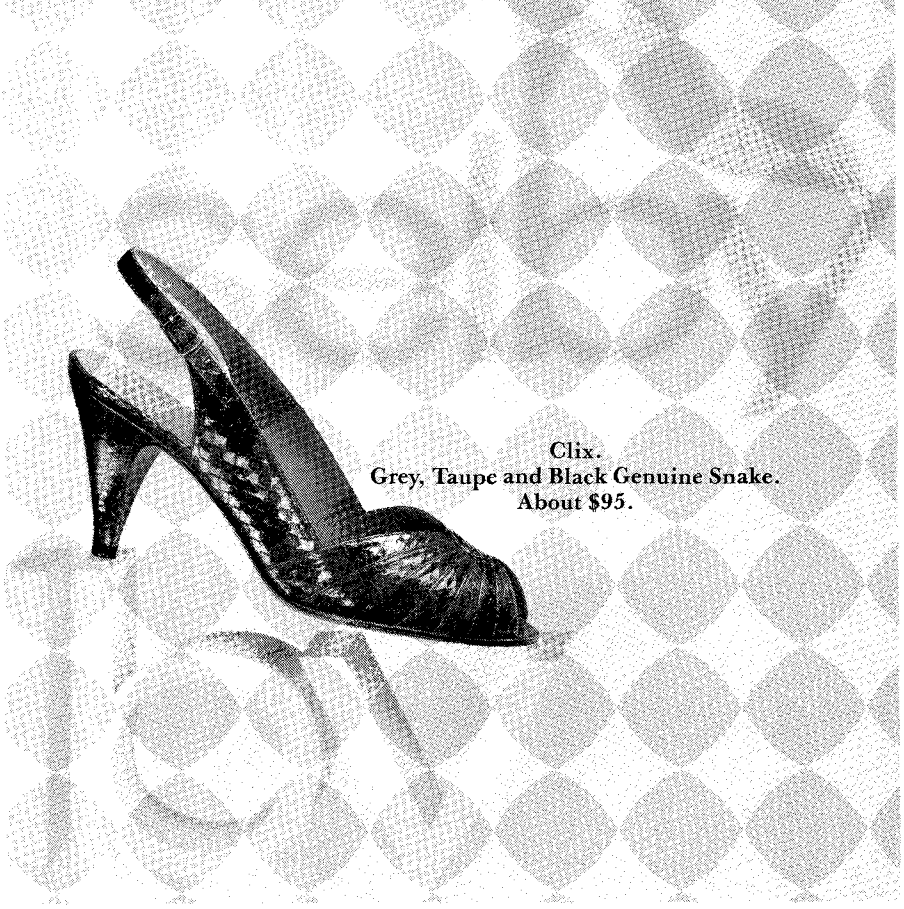

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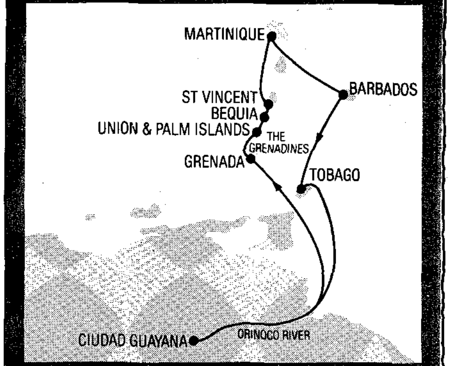

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our yard, there was a cassia, whose sprays of golden blossom were beaten down in the rainy season, carpeting the ground with yellow, and, growing beside it, an ylang-ylang, whose jade-green flowers would scent the air at night.

HAVING to return to Trinidad—to St. James—nearly always fills me with alarm. It brings on this nightmare: that, having once arrived there, I may never be able to get out again. I imagine myself trapped there forever. I become agitated in the overheated torpor of a St. James Sunday afternoon when I hear, as I used to during my childhood and adolescence, the ravings of evangelical broadcasters, local and American, who hour after hour monopolize the radio. I see myself, sprawled on a bed, staring out through glass louvres at the cloud shadows moving across the slopes of the Northern Range, feeling drugged, somnambulistically aware of the howling voices threatening eternal damnation in a hell supposed to be even hotter than our little island.

I grew up in a no man's land. Suburban life, with its ease and its unrelenting worship of American standards, American ideals, had not existed when I was a boy. Its assumptions and prejudices were unfamiliar to me. If I was like a fish out of water at a Hindu rite, I was no less a fish out of water at a drive-in cinema scented with the vapors of hot dogs and hamburgers. Such definition as I do now possess has its roots in nothing other than personal exigency. Every day, I have to redefine myself.

Trinidad challenges my uneasy perception of what I am. It seems to mock me. When I stare at its hills, when I hear the Sunday threats of its evangelists, when I see Cora standing on a street corner banging a tambourine, I become a boy again.

ON a sunny summer afternoon, I turned my back on Oxford. The future was not merely indistinct but murky. My dreams of philosophical wisdom had ended a couple of years before. For me, there were no tribal hopes or structures upon which to lean. I had no vision of myself: I would have to start afresh; to discover, unaided, my human possibility. In my meagre baggage was the beginning of a novel, the outlines of which had occurred to me one bilious and despairing afternoon as, sick in mind and body, I gazed at the mossy apple tree

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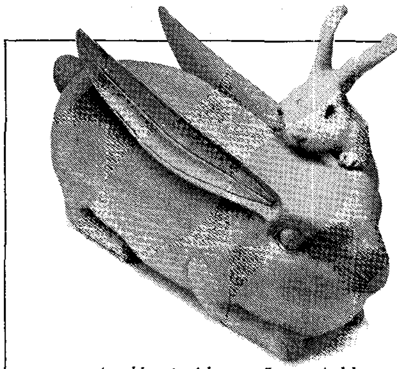

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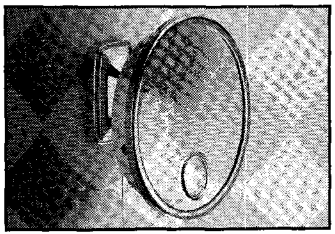

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that grew in the unkempt garden of the flat I had been renting. It wasn't much to be taking away after four years, but it was better than nothing: it gave me, however unreliably, a reason to go on living. After some searching, my wife and I found an affordable bed-sitter off Ladbroke Grove—a London equivalent of St. James—not far from the Portobello Road. I bought a ravaged leather-topped desk with brass-handled drawers. This I installed in a corner of the room where the West London light filtered milkily through filthy lace curtains.

That is the beginning of another kind of story. —SHIVA NAIPAUL

◆

DREAMS OF A WORK

Waking to wind chimes, I say,
"This could be China."

Then breathing exercises,
cold water from the tap,
damp matches, black coffee,
sun-flecked peaches on a sky-blue plate.

Now the ellipse of the day
takes shape, its sharp foci
these morning & afternoon walks
in to the post office.

& in between, dreams of a work
worthy of a lifetime:
to record how, at low tide,
the sailboats float
in their own reflections,
or the way polished stones
are turned over & over
on the lathe of the waves of the bay.

At last, evening's shadow play,
& learning to lie so still
my breath barely disturbs the mirror.

—L. S. ASEKOFF

◆

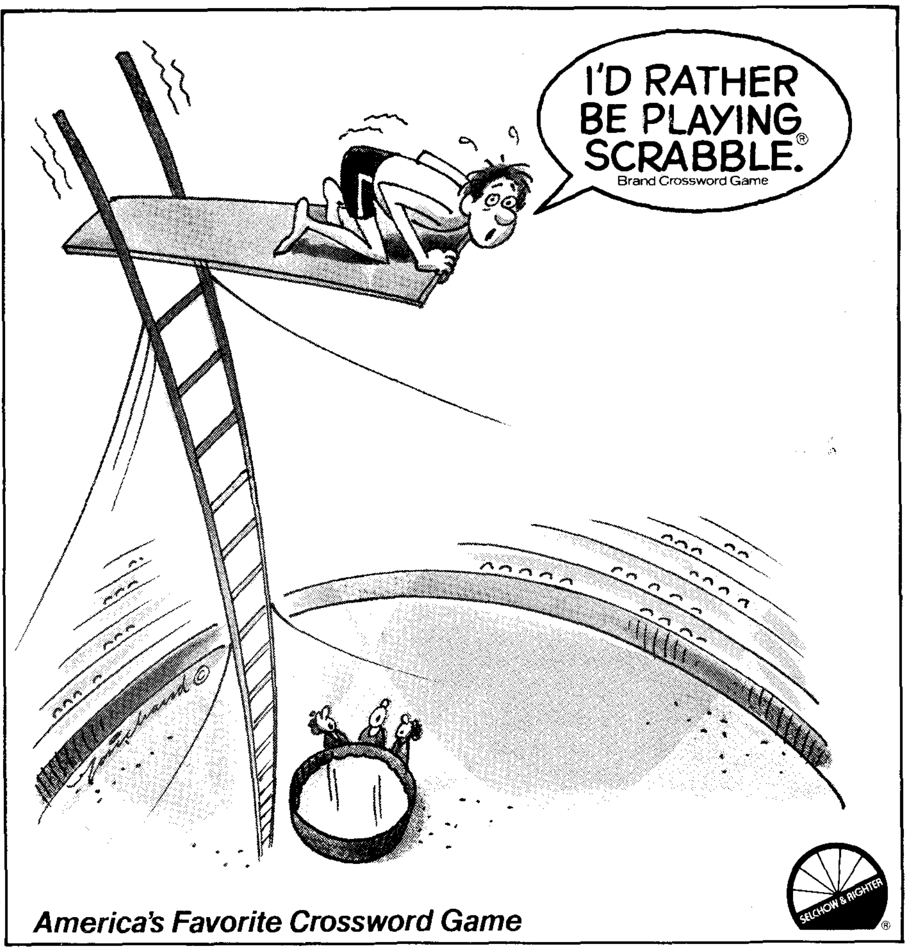
CULINARY NOTES FROM ALL OVER

[*From the Santa Barbara (Calif.) News-Press*]

Here is a sample of what a posh convention party menu is like.

The 200 guests at a Pepsico dinner for foreign diplomats on Aug. 23, the final day of the convention, start with hors d'oeuvres of smoked Irish salmon, fresh beluga caviar and steak tartare. The main course is beef Wellington with a bald eagle made of dough perched on top.

And for the past three weeks, a dessert chef has been carving four-inch blocks of white chocolate into miniature White Houses that will cap dishes of amaretto mousse decorated with elephant-shaped mounds of raspberries.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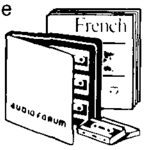

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FULL BASKET

A WOMAN I know named Nathalie Waag, who takes in a few boarders at a time for a holiday she calls Eight Days in Provence, makes it clear in advance that in her view a day in Provence consists basically of going to a market and then eating what you managed to get there. That makes sense to me. There is no better way to spend a morning in Provence than to go to a market in a town square, where farm couples have set up small tables with what they picked just before dawn, and where huge trucks have opened side panels to reveal that they are in fact butcher shops or shoe stores; there is no better way to spend an evening in Provence than to eat the dinner that somebody like Nathalie has made out of the contents of the market basket. I can see having a swim or taking in a façade or two late in the afternoon, but I would consider those strictly side activities. Of course, I have always been a sucker for markets. I think that French towns should be required to announce on their city-limits signs which day is market day, the way American towns sometimes announce the time and place of the regular Kiwanis lunch. I even like going to the market in England, where a foreign visitor runs the risk of becoming dispirited at the thought of what the vegetables bought by English housewives have in store for them. In New York, I'm a regular at the Saturday market in Union Square, where farmers come from upstate and New Jersey and Pennsylvania to sell fruits and vegetables to miraculously cheerful New Yorkers; when the legendary baker from Yonkers arrives at her usual spot, rather late in the morning as market time goes, I stand patiently with the other devotees as she and her husband unload a car that contains a steaming tray of something too good to be called cheesecake. I like the couple from Yonkers—I like market people and the market atmosphere in general—but I'd stand in line to buy that cheesecake from someone who had the personality of my old Latin teacher.

This summer, I was staying for a while just outside a Provençal town called Saint-Rémy, thirty or forty miles from the farmhouse Nathalie has near Bonnieux, and I saw the proximity as an opportunity to go marketing with someone I knew to be a formidable gatherer of foodstuffs. I had once seen her in action—examining artichokes like a jeweller examining a secondhand diamond, chatting up the elderly farm woman who happened to bring in the best mixture of baby lettuce every market day, fixing some vegetable man with the narrowed eyes of a customs inspector as she asked him precisely when the vegetables were picked. I've never been able to get much out of an artichoke examination myself. And even though I've read all the instructions about how to gauge the freshness of a fish by looking him in the eye, the fish I eyeball look pretty noncommittal. I'm still waiting for the first one to lower his eyes in guilty knowledge of how long he has been out of the water.

I knew Nathalie to be the sort of person who could look a *rouget* in the eye and get something out of the experience. Also, she obviously had a wide knowledge of which Provençal specialties could be found where—vital information for a short-time visitor, since the Ministry of Tourism had never paid much attention to my suggestion that each French town list on its city-limits sign, just below the announcement of which day is market day, any local delicacies that the residents are particularly proud of ("The bakery right on the square has an excellent version of *fougasse*, a Provençal specialty that is somewhere between bread and pizza. We think you'd enjoy it"). I couldn't really complain about the food we had been eating in Provence. I was regularly coming home from the market—the Wednesday market in Saint-Rémy, say, or the Saturday market in Arles—with three or four different kinds of lettuce, raspberries, cherries, rice from the Camargue, *saucisson* from the Ardèche, two or three different kinds of pâté, four or five different kinds of *chèvre*, a selection of olives, a farm-grown chicken, a couple of pizzas, and half a dozen Vietnamese spring rolls. Every morning, I would bicycle into the village, to a baker named Mme. Rosa, for *pain de brioche* and peasant bread and croissants. A Provençal restaurant only fifteen or twenty minutes away served an astonishing *pistou*—a Provençal specialty that bears the same resemblance to vegetable soup that a Greek wedding celebration bears to a bridge-club tea. Still, the thought that I could be completely unaware of some renowned local cheese practically at our

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doorstep or some brilliant purveyor of *bourride* just down the road was always with me, and it's the sort of thought that can put me off my feed.

SEVERAL years ago, Nathalie operated a restaurant in Vence for a while, but she says that it was something she got into more or less by accident and got out of with great relief. She likes to shop and she likes to cook and she likes to sit around the dinner table with friends, but she doesn't take to bookkeeping. Just after her restaurant closed, she happened to meet Alice Waters, the proprietor of Chez Panisse, in Berkeley, who occupies more or less the same role in what is sometimes called the New California Cuisine that Emma Goldman once occupied in the old American anarchism. They discovered that they had a lot in common—particularly after they had spent some time at Nathalie's place in Bonnieux going to markets.

Eventually, one of Nathalie's sons worked for a while at Chez Panisse as a salad chef. Her other son still works there; he goes to market. Nathalie became part of what amounts to an East Bay–Provence alliance. Kermit Lynch, the wine importer closest to Chez Panisse and the restaurants that spun off of it, specializes in the wines of Provence; the proprietors of one winery he deals with, near Bandol, act as sort of French country cousins for any of the East Bay food people who are in the area. Richard Olney, who grew up in a small town about eighty miles from Sioux City but has lived in the South of France for more than twenty years, is the cookbook author who had the most influence on Alice Waters and some of the other East Bay chefs—which means, I suppose, that the New California Cuisine, like a good bit of the California population, can trace its origins to Iowa. (Like Olney and a number of other people who have become particularly knowledgeable about Provençal food, Nathalie is from somewhere else. Until she was eighteen or so, she lived in Switzerland—an experience she discusses in the tone a Manhattan museum curator might use to discuss his boyhood in Tulsa.) When Nathalie decided to offer her Eight Days in Provence package, she was in California, visiting her son; she simply put up a notice at Chez Panisse and a notice at Kermit Lynch's retail wine store, not far away. The potential guests sorted themselves out when they met

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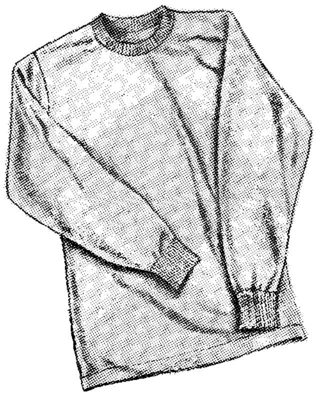

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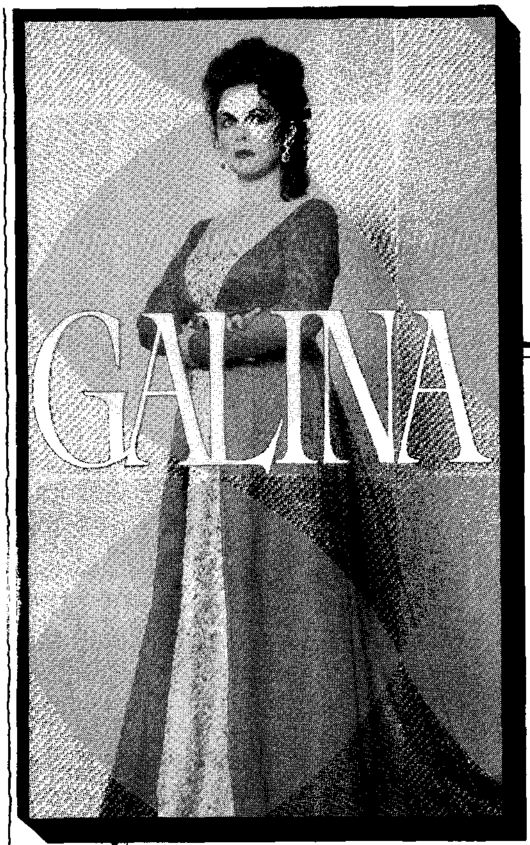
Nathalie to ask about details. When some people asked whether tennis facilities were convenient to the house, Nathalie realized that they would not be suitable for her; when they saw the look on her face in response, they must have realized that her notion of Eight Days in Provence would not be suitable for them.

MONDAY, the day I joined Nathalie and her guests, is market day in Cavaillon—the place the melon was named after—but Nathalie, who considers the Cavaillon market nothing special, normally goes to Forcalquier instead. She doesn't keep a rigid schedule, but there are markets she usually visits on certain days of the week. On Sunday, there is a market at L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue that is good not just for food but for antiques. On Tuesday or Thursday, Nathalie usually goes to the market in Aix-en-Provence. On Wednesday, she often goes to Saint-Rémy. Saturday is market day in Apt, a city only a few miles from Bonnieux. On Friday, Nathalie and her guests sometimes forgo marketing in favor of a trip to a winery not far from Les Baux and a long lunch at a restaurant that still serves the traditional Provençal Friday meal of aioli—garlic mayonnaise accompanied by cod and snails and potatoes and vegetables to scoop it up with. In Provence, a club can be said to be holding an aioli in the way a club in Texas can be said to be holding a barbecue, and the word has the same sort of strong regional identification. In an antique stall at the Arles market late one Saturday morning—at about the time I was beginning to have second thoughts about whether I had chosen the right one of a dozen or so different types of sausage—I saw copies of an old Provençal newspaper that was called *L'Aïoli*. It was one of the moments when I realized that I was probably going to eat pretty well in Provence no matter how many delicacies escaped my notice: people who can name a newspaper the *Garlic Mayonnaise* are my kind of folks.

Nathalie likes to go to Forcalquier partly because it's a change of scenery—it's on the northeast edge of Provence, in the area sometimes known as the Basses-Alpes—and partly because there are venders there who aren't found in the other markets she visits. Some of the venders are from cities farther to the north and east, like Digne. There are also a number of counterculture venders. Apparently, some areas in the South of France had a great influx of



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young dropouts after the political turmoil in Paris in 1968, and Forcalquier is a place where many of them managed to stick it out. The result is that the market has a broad supply of organic vegetables and stone-ground flour and other staples of what the unsympathetic might think of as hippie fodder.

On the Monday I joined Nathalie in Forcalquier, the people staying at her house for Eight Days in Provence were two amiable couples from Oakland. Among them was a periodontist who took careful notes for a journal of eating he was preparing for his patients—a journal that, I am pleased to say, had nothing to do with what sort of foods would be beneficial for oral hygiene but concentrated instead on what sort of foods had made him particularly happy. Before we started our wanderings through the market, Nathalie pointed out an outdoor café where we would all meet when the venders began to pack up their wares, around noon. Nathalie was shopping for lunch as well as dinner, since she always shows up at the agreed-upon café with a picnic. I did not, as it turned out, get any lessons in artichoke examination by watching her gather food for two meals. She picked what she needed by judgment that had become too natural to put into words. When I asked her how it's possible to distinguish among so many venders of *chèvre*—every one of them displays *chèvres* of various freshness, arranged like well-trained platoons—she looked surprised, and then explained, "You look at the cheese."

The Forcalquier market is the sort of market that spills out through the town, so that when it seems to be over you come across two or three more squares filled with garlic venders and cheese tables and chicken dealers and fishmongers and flower stalls and at least one fruit-and-vegetable dealer who unpacked his avocados from a box that said "MISSION PRODUCE, INC., OXNARD CA 93034." Nathalie picked up a guinea fowl and some green beans and some shallots for dinner. For the café picnic, she bought *fougasse* with anchovies and olive oil, some pizza with wild mushrooms, and two or three *pains bagnat*—a *pain bagnat* being, more or less, a *salade niçoise* in a bun. For dessert, she bought some *chèvre* and some *brousse*, which is a kind of cheese made with ewe's milk. To avoid problems about bringing her own lunch to a café, Nathalie had picked a place that did not serve food.

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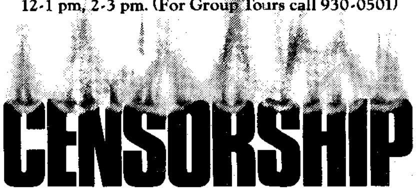

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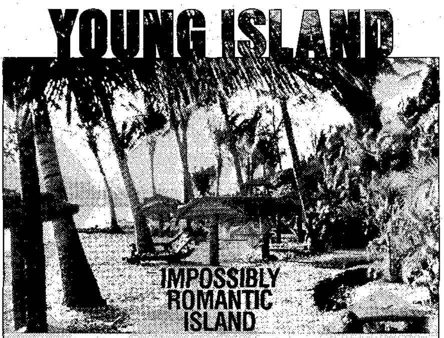

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As we all tore into the picnic, the waiter didn't look irritated—just envious.

Everyone at the table agreed that the market had been splendid. Forcalquier had an almost rustic quality to it—a great contrast, Nathalie said, to Aix-en-Provence, where the Tuesday picnic would be held in a café on the sophisticated Cours Mirabeau and the dessert would be from a chocolate shop that is known in Paris. Nathalie likes variety. She goes to what is actually a rather small market in Saint-Rémy on Wednesday, she said, partly because of the charm of the town, and partly because of a bakery that sells fish-shaped pastry filled with *brandade de morue*.

"*Brandade de morue!*" I said. *Brandade de morue*—a sort of paste made from salt cod and potatoes and garlic—happens to be one of my favorite dishes.

Nathalie said that it was available from a baker named Mme. Rosa.

"But Mme. Rosa's our baker!" I said. "I never realized!"

Nathalie shrugged, as if everyone knew about Mme. Rosa's *feuilleté de brandade de morue*. I suppose it did seem rather obvious. What would be inside fish-shaped pastry—apples and cinnamon? Nathalie said it was about time to get back to Bonnieux. Her guests were planning to spend the late afternoon writing postcards and playing *pétanque*, the Provençal version of *boules*, and looking forward to what Nathalie was going to concoct from the guinea fowl and the shallots and the green beans and whatever else she had around the house. I was ready to head back toward Saint-Rémy. Although my market basket was rather heavy, I thought I might stop at Saint-Étienne, where farmers who have gathered to sell their produce to distributors will part with small lots before the commercial market officially opens. I also thought I'd make a stop at Mme. Rosa's.

—CALVIN TRILLIN

•

SAN FRANCISCO—A woman in a tan trenchcoat leaned over and placed a single yellow lily on the flat, gray cement floor in front of the black, shoulder-high picture panel that ran the length of the right side of Grace Cathedral which sat on a hill in the middle of the Tuesday evening fog that had started to swallow up part of the city and the bay below.—*Mike Barnicle in the Boston Globe.*

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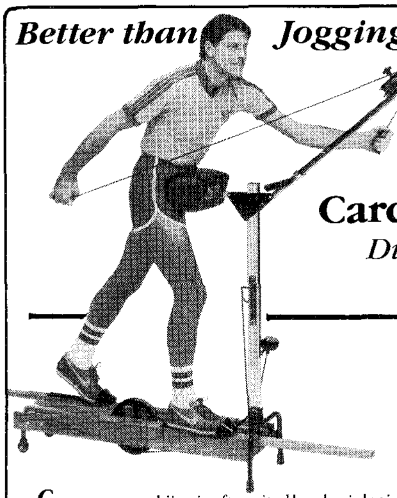

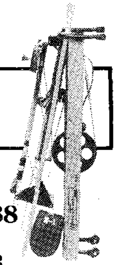

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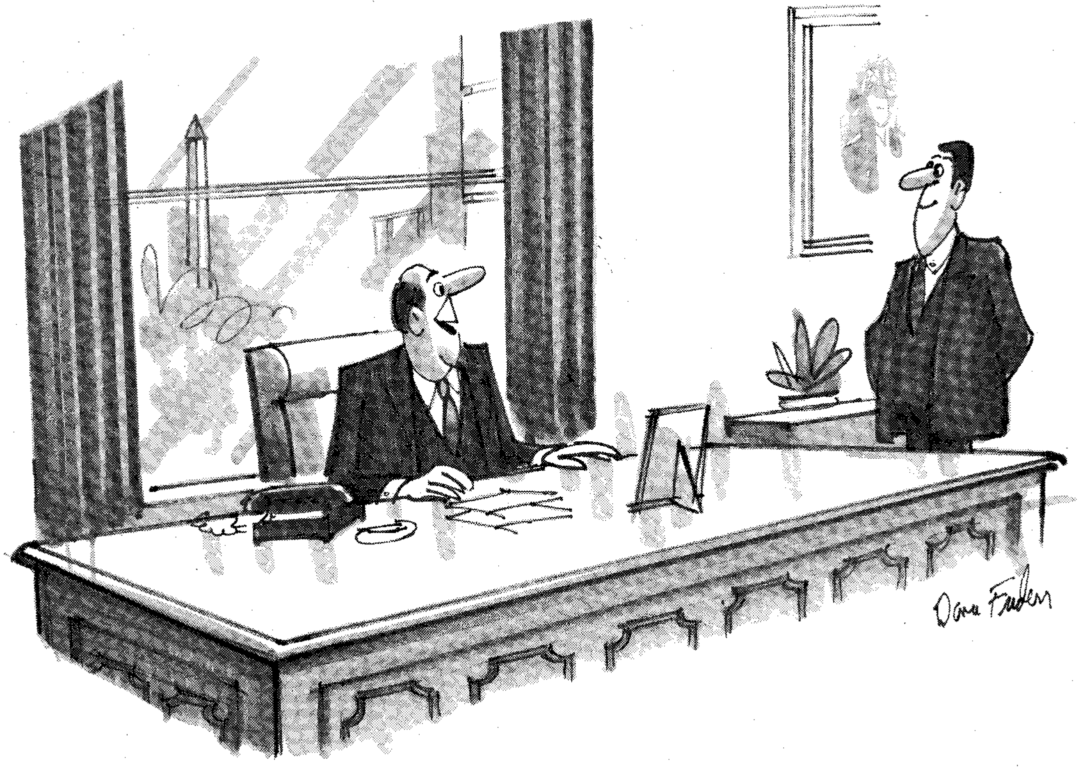
JAZZ

The Early Blue Notes

Alfred Lion and Francis Wolff, the visionary German immigrants and ardent jazz-record collectors who founded Blue Note Records in New York in 1939, created a classic catalogue of recordings during the first five years of the company's existence. The two men worked exclusively and unfashionably with black musicians, and they mixed them up in unique and joyous ways. They put the New Orleans clarinettist Edmond Hall with the Chicago boogie-woogie pianist Meade Lux Lewis (on celeste) and added the fleet young avant-garde Oklahoma City guitarist Charlie Christian (on acoustic guitar) and the bassist Israel Crosby. The four numbers they made are airy and spacious and delicate. Lion and Wolff combined the liquid, legato trumpeter Frankie Newton with the driving trombonist J. C. Higginbotham, and on one date they added the New Orleans clarinettist and soprano saxophonist Sidney Bechet. The rhythm sections included either Lewis or his Chicago peer Albert Ammons, the bassist Johnny Williams, and the great modern drummer Sidney Catlett. The results reached a new lyrical intensity—almost abandon—in jazz. Lion and Wolff put Bechet with Lewis, the guitarist Teddy Bunn, Williams, and Catlett, and Bechet made a sumptuous, surpassing four-minute "Summertime," which became something of a best-seller. They let Ammons and Lewis loose on twelve-inch 78 r.p.m.s for the first time, giving them the room to find their imaginative limits. They even allowed Lewis to record a slow blues, "The Blues," which lasted twenty-five minutes and filled five 78-r.p.m. sides. (They also let him do four twelve-inch sides on harpsichord. It was not a fortunate meeting: both Lewis and the instrument sounded put upon and helpless.) Blue Note's last great early outpouring took place between 1943 and 1945. Here are the horns: on eight sides, Sidney De Paris, Edmond Hall, Vic Dickenson; on four sides, De Paris, Ben Webster, Dickenson; on four sides, Hall, Benny Morton, Harry Carney; on four sides, Morton, Webster, Barney Bigard. The rhythm sections had James P. Johnson, Don Frye, or Sammy Benskin on piano, and the drummer for all but the last session was Catlett. The music, of a kind rarely heard before or after, is loose, easy, sure New York jamming, with conversational ensembles and soaring solos, often backed by riffs.

Some of these beautiful recordings were reissued thirty years ago on ten-inch L.P.s, and after Blue Note was sold to Liberty Records, in 1965, some were released chaotically on twelve-inch L.P.s. All have long been out of print, and it has seemed in recent years as if Lion and Wolff's early records might vanish forever. But a record producer and jazz writer named Michael Cuscuna and a former recording executive named Charlie Lourie have started Mosaic Records, and they intend to reissue most of the early Blue Note recordings (as well as material from other labels) by leasing them from EMI/Liberty, packaging them in limited editions, and selling them by mail (Mosaic Records, 1341 Ocean Avenue, Suite 135, Santa Monica, California 90401). Their first release consists of a Gerry Mulligan set, which includes all the Pacific Jazz and Capitol sides he made in the early fifties with his first quartets and with his tentette; a Thelonious Monk box, made up of his complete, often stunning Blue Notes from the late forties and early fifties (Lion and Wolff made exceptional recordings into the sixties); and a boogie-woogie album, which collects all the solo work Meade Lux Lewis and Albert Ammons did for Blue Note between 1939 and 1944. This last, called "The Complete Blue Note Recordings of Albert Ammons and Meade Lux Lewis," contains thirty-four sides, only twelve of which have been reissued before and eight of which have never come out at all.



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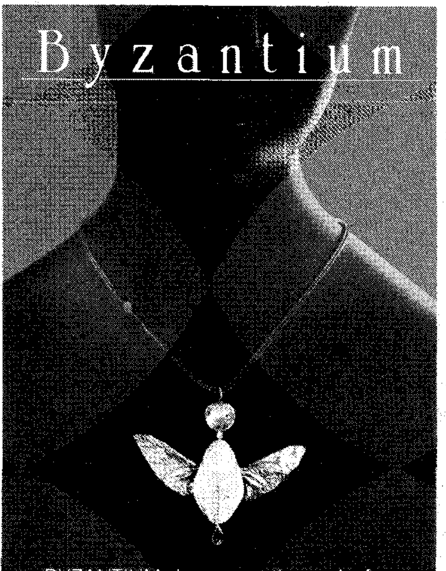
that sets off the right hand. The right hand uses a lot of dotted eighth or sixteenth notes, heavy, often hammering chords, riffs, floating offbeat chords (sometimes placed just behind the offbeat), tremolos, and single notes spaced out four or five to a chorus. The result is a sort of counterpoint, in which there is a lot of dissonance—and a lot of consonant poetry. At its best, boogie-woogie was a powerful, primitive blues music—a strange outpouring of the black South and Southwest around the time of the First World War. The oddest thing about this music was the fad it had in this country between 1938 and the early forties. But it was too limited, too ingrown to withstand such exposure, and the craze just about destroyed it. The craze also destroyed its chief practitioners, all of them worn musically threadbare long before they died.

Ammons and Lewis, nurtured by Pinetop Smith and Jimmy Yancey, were quite different from one another by the time they made their first Blue Note recordings. (In 1928, Smith, Ammons, and Lewis lived in the same rooming house in Chicago.) Ammons was a loose, swinging pianist. His left hand rocked ("Boogie Woogie Blues"), and his right hand was a constantly revolving array of tremolos, glinting upper-register clusters, and brief single-note melodic lines. "Suitcase Blues" (after Hersal Thomas's recording) and "Bass Goin' Crazy" are jubilant and generous and jumping. They are full of billows and wind. Lewis was probably the better pianist, but he had a hard, narrow quality. (None of the boogie-woogie pianists were highly accomplished; their techniques generally allowed them to play what was in their heads, and missed notes and uneven chorus lengths were ignored in the hustle.) Ammons worked in oils; Lewis did etchings. Lewis's great onomatopoeic train pieces ("Honky Tonk Train Blues," "Chicago Flyer," "Six Wheel Chaser," "Bass on Top") are driving, thundering wonders, but they have a metallic quality—they *are* machines. This quality comes through in the celebrated twenty-five-minute "The Blues." Done in a medium-slow tempo, it is a meditation on the blues spelled out in offbeat chords, low-register single notes, and occasional tremolos, accompanied by a gentle four-four single-note left hand. It is absorbing to compare Lewis's long blues with any of the slow blues that Art Hodes has been setting down in



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recent years. Lewis's work does not have the "down" feeling, the blue intensity, the deep melancholy of Hodes, who grew up in the same place and time as Lewis and Ammons and is probably—though he is rarely given his due—the greatest of blues pianists. (Lion and Wolff recorded Hodes in the mid-forties.)

More Ammons has been given us. Milt Gabler, who started Commodore Records a year or so before Lion and Wolff started Blue Note, caught up with boogie-woogie in 1944. He recorded ten sides—six of them Ammons solos and the rest Ammons with a band—which have now been issued by Commodore as "Boogie Woogie and the Blues." Two of the piano solos have never been released on L.P., and the rest have never been released at all; at least two ("Albert's Special Boogie" and "The Boogie Rocks") are first-rate and the equal of many of his Blue Note recordings. All have Ammons' intense rhythms, his winging tremolos, and his upper-register garlands. The band sides nod genially in the direction of four band numbers Ammons recorded in 1936 with Guy Kelly on trumpet, Israel Crosby, and Jimmy Hoskins on drums. Boogie-woogie, orchestral in itself, fits well with horns (the big-band arrangers of the early forties did not use it imaginatively), and the Commodore sides fly. On hand with Ammons are Hot Lips Page, Don Byas, Vic Dickenson, Israel Crosby, and Sid Catlett. "Jammin' the Boogie," based on "Boogie Woogie Stomp," is the only outright boogie-woogie number. "Blues in the Groove" and "Bottom Blues" are aching, rumbling slow blues, notable for Dickenson's smears, growls, asides, and instrumental-verbal speechifying. Catlett lifts the proceedings to exhilarating heights, and on the medium-tempo "The Breaks," patterned after Pinetop Smith, he takes a chorus in which he irregularly chokes and releases a cymbal with his left hand, all the while hitting it with a stick held in his right hand—a dancing, jigging, shaking effect no other drummer has mastered. It fits the music to a T.

—WHITNEY BALLIETT

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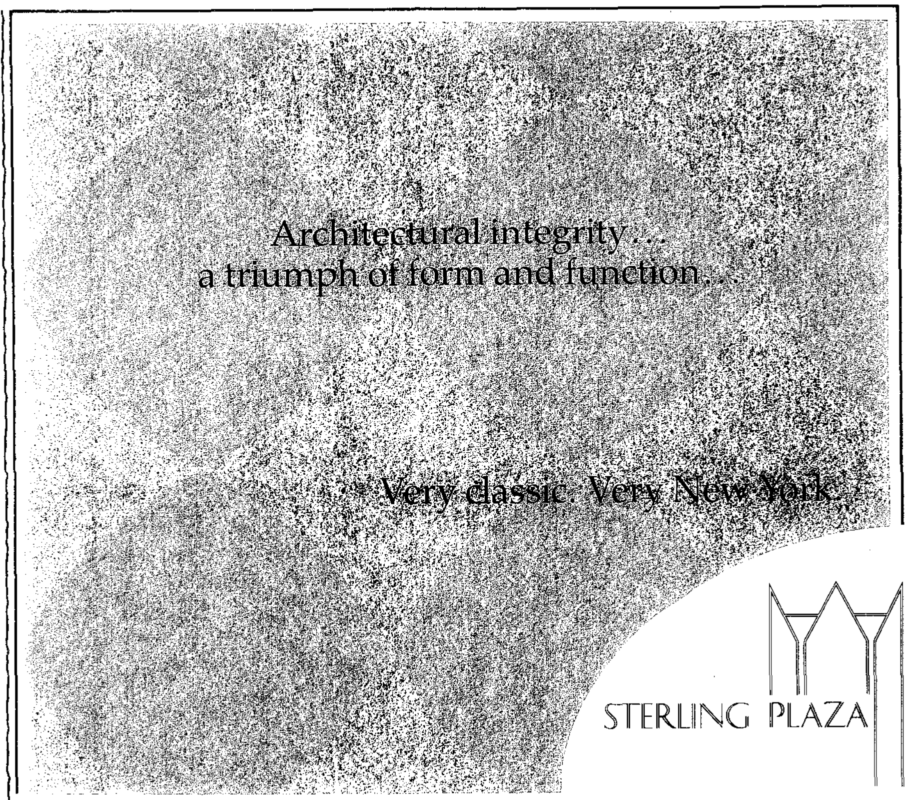
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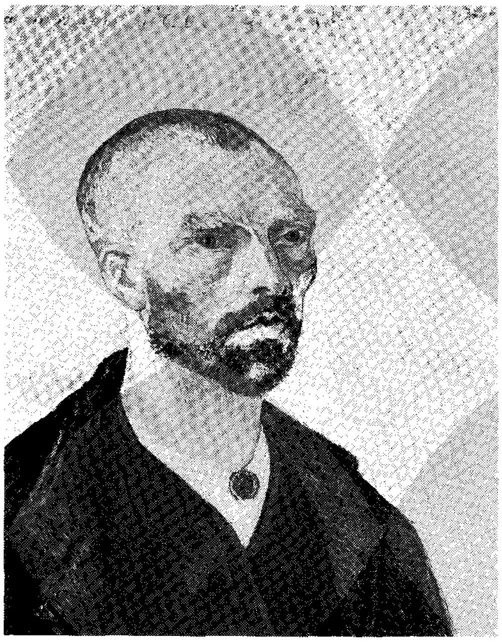

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

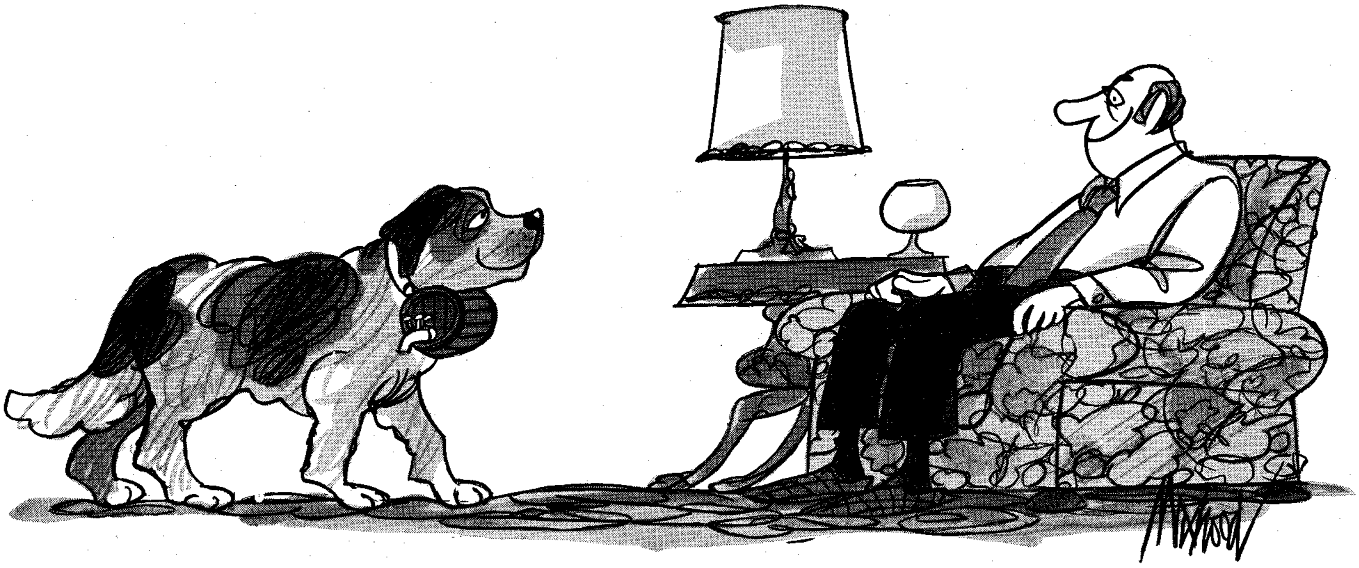
Roger & Edwina, Sheena, and Uncle Jean

Roger (Steve Martin), the hero of "All of Me," loves jazz and has been moonlighting as a guitarist, but he doesn't quite have the guts to quit his squirrel-cage job as a lawyer and take his chances as a musician. On his thirty-eighth birthday, he comes to a decision—the wrong one. He'll give up his music, marry his fiancée—the boss's daughter—and buckle down to work. On this fateful day, the boss assigns him the task of going to the Beverly Hills mansion of the tyrannical rich invalid Edwina Cutwater (Lily Tomlin), who wants to revise her will. Born with a weak heart and bedridden from infancy, Edwina has been told by her doctors that she has only a few more days to live; she has used her immense wealth to research the situation and buy a new life, because she hasn't had any fun in this one. She has imported a Tibetan swami, Prahka Lasa (Richard Libertini), who will see to it that at the moment of her death her spiritual substance is astrally projected into another body. The curvy, long-legged frame she is scheduled to acquire belongs to the obliging blond Terry (Victoria Tennant), her English stableman's daughter, who has agreed to vacate it. Edwina instructs Roger to arrange for her entire estate to go to Terry, so that when she takes over Terry's luscious physique she'll finally be able to enjoy her millions.

Roger, with his new commitment to the grindstone, is in no mood to listen to Edwina's talk of fulfillment in another life. She squints in her foxy, spinsterish way and tells him bluntly that she can come back from the dead in a different body "because I'm rich." He thinks she's insane, and refuses to revise the will. She throws him out, and she and her entourage—Prahka Lasa, Terry, and all—drive to the law firm's downtown L.A. offices. There she talks to the boss, and he fires Roger and makes the changes she wants. Her rage at Roger and the expedition to the business district prove too much for her, though, and she expires right there in the office. The poor flustered swami captures her spiritual substance in his special bronze pot, but, caught off balance, he drops it out the window and it klonks Roger, who's leaving the premises, on the noggin. Edwina can't take full possession of his body, because he's still in it; she enters into joint occupancy with him—she controls the right side of his body, he the left—and though she talks to him all the time, she's visible only when he looks in the mirror. "All of Me" is a romantic comedy about how these two antagonists in the same body fall in love and find happiness.

This nifty premise, taken from an unpublished novel, "Me Two," by Ed Davis, is given classic American-comedy contours in the script, by Phil Alden Robinson. It isn't an elegantly written script; at times it's rather rudimentary and just sketches things in. But Robinson juggles a whole raft of major and minor characters and builds conflicts and variations in the manner of movies such as the Cary Grant–Constance Bennett–Roland Young "Topper," or the Cary Grant–Irene Dunne "The Awful Truth" and "My Favorite Wife," or the more recent "Tootsie." If the movie doesn't quite have the snappiness of those pictures—and it certainly lacks the high spirits and dazzlement of a comedy such as "The Lady Eve"—the reasons aren't in the structure. They're mostly in the casting of a couple of key roles, and in the directing, by Carl Reiner.

He isn't a terrible director; he has an intuitive rapport with his funny performers—with Steve Martin and Lily Tomlin and Richard Libertini, and with Jason Bernard, who plays Tyrone, Roger's black musician pal, and with Madolyn Smith, the talented and stunning brunette (she was the sophisticated lech in "Urban Cowboy") who plays Roger's nasty and extremely self-possessed fiancée. But Reiner doesn't have the instincts of a movie director. The gags just don't seem to be thought out visually in terms of the locations, and so we don't take an aesthetic pleasure in them, the way we do in, say, the gags of the most visual of all comedy artists, Buster Keaton. We don't even get the crackle of excitement that we get in the work of a director like Sydney Pollack. The camera doesn't seem to enter into Reiner's thinking; he uses it as if it were simply a recording device. The only time he uses it expressively is in the film's last—and best—moments. Reiner's "The Man with Two Brains" had more visual vitality—maybe because the cinematographer was Michael Chapman, who brings some directorial instincts to his framing. This time, Reiner is working with Richard Kline, who's often a virtuoso cinematographer but who probably, like most cinematographers, expects the director to tell him exactly what he



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wants. Reiner, however, is thinking only of what he wants from the performers. The camera setups here are klunky, especially in the scenes at the mansion, and the film often has the bland ugliness of sitcoms.

"All of Me" has charm, though, because of that yummy premise, and because Steve Martin and Lily Tomlin—who would have guessed it?—are a perfect match. Tomlin packs a personality and a whole language of movement into her early scenes; she's a distinctive enough caricature for us to intuit her presence when Martin simulates her being inside him. And we can respond to the gradual thawing out of that caricature as Roger begins to have tender feelings for this all but invisible woman. (In most of the movie, except for her brief appearances in mirrors Tomlin has to win us over with her voice.) Martin keeps her vivid for us. Right after the astral potty lands on him, Edwina jerks him around, and at first he recalls Roland Young's Topper being yanked about by invisible hands. But Martin's peculiar wizardry is that he evokes Edwina so accurately that he makes you feel it's she who's doing the yanking. He makes you feel that he has two conflicting spirits in him, and then, by the changes in his movements, makes you understand the developing harmony of those spirits. And he does some showier stunts, too. In a courtroom sequence, the exhausted Roger has fallen asleep, and Edwina takes over his legal duties for him, trying to speak and gesture like a man. So we get Steve Martin acting as Lily Tomlin acting as a gruff Steve Martin. Though Martin is on the screen most of the time, there's less of him than you may want, because he gives himself over to Edwina's spirit so thoroughly that she seems to dominate the picture. (In the courtroom scene, you're thinking of her while you're watching him.)

When Roger begins to understand how deprived Edwina has been and how much she wants to live, they start to empathize with each other—they've both been repressed, they both need a new life—and soon they're a loving couple inside him. The scriptwriter has come up with just the right bit of invention for what softens her: Roger hires his pals in a Dixieland band to escort her remains to the burial site. She loves the music, and she's touched by his wanting to give her cadaver a real sendoff. When he borrows Terry's compact and looks in the tiny mirror, he sees Edwina sniffling. Tomlin makes you know that Edwina really digs being inside Roger's body with him. And, in one flash of mad inspiration, Roger, who's trying to carry out Edwina's original plan and put her spirit where it was supposed to go (into Terry), crashes a party by disguising himself as one of the musicians; in dark glasses and a tuxedo, and with his gray hair, he somehow turns into Cary Grant. It's only for a second; when he takes off the dark glasses the illusion evaporates.

"All of Me" doesn't spill over in your mind the way some comedies do—maybe because, despite the originality of the premise, the situation (the heiress heroine, the hero's slightly antique commitment to the jazz of an earlier era) feels a little dated, a little too "nice." Besides, every scene that doesn't click takes a toll of a comedy. Dana Elcar, who plays the boss, isn't a character—he's just smooth pink padding—and the bedroom-farce subplot that he's involved in is halfhearted and undeveloped. The film also suffers a dip in energy after Roger succeeds in having Edwina's spirit projected into Victoria Tennant's Terry. Victoria Tennant is a perfectly beautiful woman, but she doesn't seem to have a funny bone in her body. She doesn't have much crispness or enthusiasm, either. And when Edwina's spirit moves into Terry's vacated body Edwina disappears, because Tennant isn't any different with Edwina inside her; she's still a droop. There's probably an idea behind Terry's equability in the early scenes, but Victoria Tennant doesn't put it across, and it's depressing when she fails to suggest that Edwina has taken over her chassis. This mild, minimalist actress seems born to be on television. (Too bad that Madolyn Smith, who knows how to make guile and bitchery funny, and who has a comic charge comparable to Lily Tomlin's, didn't get a crack at the role.)

I wish "All of Me" were better, because it's so likable—parts of it give viewers the kind of giddy pleasure that is often what we most want from the movies. I loved watching Richard Libertini in his swami helmet (with horns), which is always a little tipsy on his head. As the totally disoriented Tibetan, he steals scenes without your

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ever catching him asserting himself; it's as if he were helplessly funny. He has a real Libertini moment when Tyrone and Prahka Lasa make music together: Tyrone toots "All of Me" on his sax, and the swami plunks a piano key at regular intervals. And Steve Martin and Lily Tomlin are great unclassifiables. The romance here is in the partnership of two performers who are both uninhibited physical comics. They tune in to each other's timing the way lovers do in life, only more so. They're unified in their love of comedy, and in the last sequence—it's set in a mirror—they dance together and generate an explosive joy.

"SHEENA" features some of the best animal actors ever to grace a movie—an elephant, a rhino, chimps, lions, leopards. They're dream animals, and they form a peaceable kingdom around Sheena (Tanya Roberts) in this lighthearted adventure film—a takeoff of the late-thirties comic-strip heroine who was featured in a mid-fifties syndicated television series. Sheena, a girl Tarzan, whose white parents were killed in an avalanche in "Zambuli territory" in Africa, is raised by a hyper-cultured black woman shaman, played by Elizabeth of Toro, the Cambridge-educated lawyer princess who was Uganda's Minister of Foreign Affairs before she had differences with Idi Amin and went into exile in Kenya (where the movie was shot). The majestically beautiful Elizabeth of Toro puts Tanya Roberts, late of "Charlie's Angels," in the shade, and Roberts is too tense anyway; she takes her role a trace earnestly—she seems afraid to loosen up and come to life. But she has the face of a ballerina, a prodigious slim, muscular form, and a staring, comic-book opaqueness. She gazes into space with eyes as exquisitely blank as if they'd been put on with pale-blue chalk. She's a walking, talking icon, and she's fun to watch.

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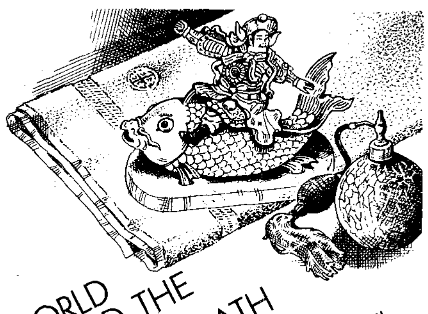

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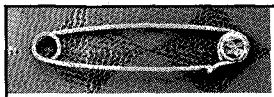

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Wass), and his cameraman (Donovan Scott)—even the mosquitoes stay out. Her zebra-striped horse is an amusing design element; it's like the horse of another color in the land of Oz. It's an honorary zebra, and she rides bareback, her blond hair blowin' in the wind. But best of all are her guardians, padding around her like household pets: the amiable lion who pokes his gigantic head into the jeep that the cameraman is in and nuzzles him, the big chimp and little chimp who trot around holding hands, the rhino who's always barging into scenes and backing out, the enormous, stately elephant who, as the shaman prepares for death, sadly digs a grave with its trunk (and not in a cutaway but in the same frame with the shaman). Sheena's pets, who are said to have constituted the largest shipment of animals ever sent *to* Africa, were trained by Hubert Wells, the head of an outfit called Animal Actors of Hollywood, and he is clearly the real hero of this project.

Written by David Newman (of "Bonnie and Clyde" and the "Superman" films) and Lorenzo Semple, Jr. ("Pretty Poison," "King Kong," "Flash Gordon"), the script has a central reversal-of-sex-roles joke—Sheena has the skills to survive in the environment, while the city-boy hero is almost helpless. Most of the time, Vic stands around lovestruck while Sheena does everything; it's a role that could wipe out an actor, but Ted Wass treats it lightly and pleasantly. (He has his best line early on, when he looks at Sheena and says, "Who is that girl?" It sounds just like "Who is that masked man?") The script also plays with the conventions of the white-goddess, queen-of-the-jungle genre, and it contrasts the Westernized style of the corrupt Prince Otwani (Trevor Thomas), who plays pro football in the States, with the Zambuli tribal values represented by the dignified shaman. (When Otwani, in his orange satin Cougars jacket, bounds into the government offices, a secretary addresses him deferentially as "Your Highness," and he responds with "Hi, baby." He greets Vic at the airport with "Hey my man, what's happenin'?") The plot gets going when Otwani murders his brother the king, who has been protecting the Zambulis' land, and tries to grab it.

The director, John Guillermin, shows you Sheena's troops doing battle—elephants pushing boulders at Otwani's invading mercenaries, the rhino charging a tank, the chimps do-

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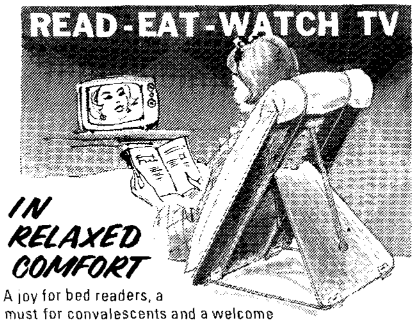

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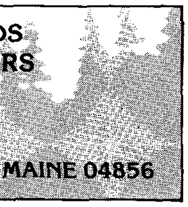

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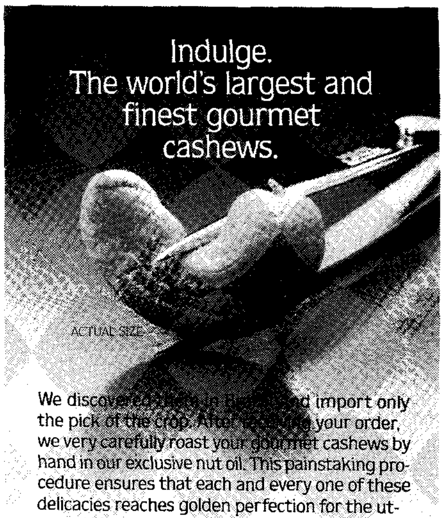

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ing whatever damage they can. Guillermin also has his pensive moments: he spends time at the edge of a lake just looking at the water birds, and there are lovely shots of the dusty plains and the African cities with their flowering plants. The cinematographer, the celebrated Pasqualino De Santis (he shot Zeffirelli's "Romeo and Juliet," Visconti's "Death in Venice," and Francesco Rosi's "Three Brothers" and his new "Carmen"), never starves the eye. (When the animals are up close, De Santis finds surprising, rich colors in them—purple and yellow and silver swirling around each other the way they do in an oil slick.)

"Sheena" is stilted, and on some level it isn't quite awake. It needs some big climactic scenes; moments that could be emotionally powerful are muffled (despite the use of fiery effects). But the picture never forgets its own silliness. When Vic, hiding from Otwani's mercenaries, sneezes, a chimp in clear view of the soldiers covers for him with a perfect matching *atchoo.* Children should love the animals and like the movie—there's a dizzy slapstick sequence of Sheena's guardian elephant knocking down a prison (Otwani has made the mistake of locking up the shaman), and there are magical images, such as the child Sheena sleeping peacefully in the custody of a giant snake who is coiled around her. The little Sheena has a jungleful of playmates, and when the lovely shaman calls her "my daughter" it's like a title. For the riffraff among us, there are throwaways such as Sheena's asking Vic to "tell me more about the places you'll show me where the jackals eat—'21'?" And there are gags such as having the villains toss the TV men's camera high in the air and use it for skeet shooting. The friends I saw the picture with stayed in a good mood; when Sheena was summoning the Zambuli warriors and all the creatures of the jungle to fight against Otwani, one of them called out, "Send in the tsetse flies!"

"KIDS today are scum," says Uncle Jean, the dotty, broken-down filmmaker played by Jean-Luc Godard in his latest movie, "First Name: Carmen." When his young niece, Carmen (Maruschka Detmers), who is mixed up with a gang of terrorist robbers, comes to see him in his hospital room and tries to entice him to make another film (so that the gang can use it as a cover for a kidnapping), he says, "We should close our eyes, not open them." Godard plays a dishevelled, grumpy old dear with stubble on his chin; he's the film's comic relief, muttering spacey epigrams, whacking himself in the face, and generously giving his niece whatever she asks for. She wants to use his apartment at the seashore; he tells her it's empty but, yes, she can use it. Adapted by Godard and/or his collaborator, Anne-Marie Miéville, from Prosper Mérimée's brief novel that became famous when Bizet used it for his opera, this "Carmen" is scored to Beethoven string quartets, with only a teasing echo of Bizet—passersby are heard whistling bits of the "Habanera."

The conception of woman as a (helplessly) destructive, amoral force is retained in the film, but it's presented in a French modernist way—as a given. We're not meant to question it, or even think about it. Carmen meets her red-haired, long-jawed Joseph (Jacques Bonaffé) while she and her confederates are robbing a bank where he works as a security guard; smitten, he joins up with her then and there, and very soon (lifting a line from "Carmen Jones") she tells him, "If I love you, that's the end of you." (He agrees, without so much as a "Huh?" or "What are you talking about?") She's completely explicit: "What do I want in life? To show the world what a woman does to a man." In this movie, either a man's passion is frustrated or it's partly fulfilled, and then, when he's more deeply aroused, he's crushed. Joseph has to kill the proud and defiant Carmen because she has rendered him incapable of doing anything else. The movie is about fate and impotence. Joseph tries to rape Carmen but can't get an erection; Uncle Jean used to make movies, but his fire is banked—it may not have gone out completely, but it doesn't flare up, either. A man's passion—whether for a woman or for movies—is what destroys him. In the film's terms, it's Godard's—it's man's—fate to be frustrated. (The picture carries the epigraph "In memoriam small movies.")

Uncle Jean, the madman artist who can say anything (and have it come out sounding witty and apropos), is a bemused self-parody. He's a crank who knows he's a crank; at the same time, he's meant to be the only voice of sanity. You can see that Godard enjoys playing his slapstick role—he brings something like a twinkle to his cynical, scatological utterances. Besides, he's the only performer in the movie who has a clear-cut idea of what's wanted of him, and Uncle Jean is the only character I could feel any connection to. The others (Carmen included) are like actors seen walking through a rehearsal. They don't even make much of a visual impression, because Godard as director doesn't have the emotional bonds with them that he had with the performers in his movies during the period from "Breathless" to "Weekend"—1959 to 1967. We were entranced with Anna Karina and Jean-Paul Belmondo and Jean-Pierre Léaud and Marina Vlady and many others because he was; the camera seemed to look right into their essence. In "First Name: Carmen," the camera looks at the performers with the eyes of an apathetic stranger.

Godard uses a number of alienation devices. The crime scenes aren't led up to: we're suddenly thrust into the scramble of the bank heist, which is staged like a brawl in a Western; it's a theatre-of-the-absurd heist that negates any element of suspense or excitement. Or Godard will give us voice-overs of people who are at a distance, and they'll be delivering tangential remarks that relate to the director's past concerns—remarks that are like family jokes. Or he'll interrupt the dialogue track and leave us watching Carmen and Joseph moving their lips while we hear the sound of the sea. Right after the bank holdup, he sends Carmen and Joseph (tied together at the wrist) to a men's washroom and keeps the image of Carmen sitting on the urinal totally sanitized, except that a slob of a man is standing at the washbasins eating something like jelly out of a container with his fingers—slurping it greedily, disgustingly. But we don't need to be alienated from this movie—Godard (as he works now) can't help alienating us. We need to be drawn in.

His dissociation techniques here may be similar to the ones in his earlier movies, but they're not used to wake you up. They're his way of brushing the narrative aside. (It's no more than a few familiar signposts of the femme-fatale genre anyway.) From the way this movie is put together, we can guess that though Godard is resigned to having to tell some sort of story, he feels it's an imposition on him—an irritation, or worse. And he displaces the sensuality that people expect from a Carmen movie onto images that have no specific relation to her story. Part of the picture is set in the seaside town of Trouville, where Carmen and Joseph use Uncle Jean's empty apartment (in

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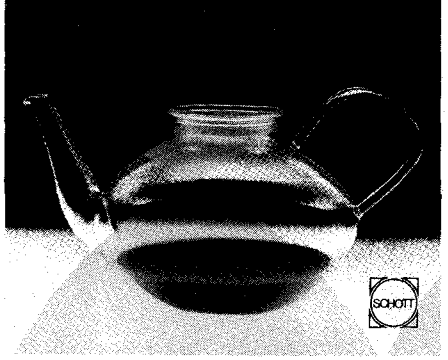
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a lackadaisical reminder of "Last Tango in Paris"), and, throughout the film, shots of the waves breaking against the rocks are intercut with Carmen and Joseph's travails; there are also intercut images of the Paris traffic at dusk and of two Métro trains crossing over a canal at night, and frequent views of the string quartet that is practicing and (sometimes) performing the Beethoven we hear on the soundtrack. (Actually, we're hearing recordings by several different groups, and a ringer—the actress Myriem Roussel, who has a small part—is put among the musicians to give the music a whimsical tie to the story.) The movement of the sea and the flow of traffic have a sense of mystery, and the musicians are photographed glowingly, serenely. These cutaways are where the feelings are, and the scenes that we might expect to be voluptuous and hot are perfunctory, and sometimes depressive, sometimes coy. Initially, at least, a viewer may be charmed by the mournful, unkempt Uncle Jean (who fumbles with his slide rule the way Godard in public appearances sometimes fools around with his pocket calculator), but we never get to know Carmen or Joseph, and their nudity has an impersonal chill, a vapid "frankness." When Carmen stands, wearing only a red T-shirt, next to the seated Joseph, his eyes are on a direct level with her pubic area—and so are the eyes of the audience. Godard may be playing a few games here, but the point of the scene is that Carmen is so contemptuously indifferent to Joseph that she doesn't care if she tortures him or not. This is what makes the poor lug impotent: he's alone with a half-naked girl who treats him as if he were part of the furniture. And the director treats both of them as part of the furniture. Godard might almost be taking a weird sort of revenge on the supple, pretty girl with a puffy lower lip and free, tangled hair. He might be saying, "I'm not entranced by you. You don't drive me crazy."

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The women in his sixties movies did drive him crazy—that's part of what gives those movies their lyrical zing. The 1965 "Pierrot le Fou"—which was his real "Carmen"—had such a poisonous masochistic charge that the hero wrapped dynamite around his head and blew himself sky high. And that, metaphorically, must be what Godard felt his relationship to moviemaking was. From the way this new film is made, it appears that Godard feels hurt on some deep level and he thinks the movies did it to him—and he's not going to let himself get hurt again. He won't throw himself into this project. He gives the story a flat, dry treatment and entertains himself with Beethoven and the rolling surf and with a limited palette—soft, somber tones and subdued golden ones—that suggests the classics (but not of movies).

The surf has too close a relationship to the ineluctable-fate aphorisms: it's used meaningfully (the pull of the sea, the power of woman), and so there's a redundancy here, and—if I may be forgiven—an old-wave banality. (After dunking us in the wet over and over, the film actually has Joseph explain his passion for Carmen to the girl who's playing viola in the string quartet by telling her that he is driven toward Carmen by a force "like the tide.") In this context, even simple shots of ships passing each other are banalized. Some of the images, though, are redemptively beautiful: the nocturnal views of cars gliding out of Paris, the moving white line of the surf at night—an abstraction with no sentiments attached. And Godard keeps all his sets of images in motion: he's the rare case of an artist whose command of his medium becomes more assured as his interests dry up. Working with Raoul Coutard as cinematographer, he gives you the feeling that he can do almost anything and you'll keep watching it, mesmerized by the rhythms of sound and image. But you may not feel very good afterward.

Godard's movies have always been self-referential, and this one has links to his whole body of work (particularly to "Pierrot le Fou," in which he used Sam Fuller the way he now uses Uncle Jean, and to the 1975 "Numéro Deux"), but it doesn't have the fresh, exploratory quality of the sixties movies—the excitement of going back over earlier themes and seeing new possibilities in them. The references—such as the use of a Tom Waits song that recalls Coppola's "One from the Heart"—seem empty. The picture is Godardian in a way that is sometimes amusing but makes us condescend to it, fondly—and, after a while, not so fondly. Despite Coutard's ravishing lighting, it feels drained. I began to long for the jazzy primary colors that gave Godard's sixties movies their Pop clarity, and for the contemporaneity that kept a viewer's mind leaping—and did it impudently, joyously. When you see a highly praised new work by the man who is the greatest innovative artist of modern movies—the man who reënergized movies—it's a letdown to see something as thin and precious as "First Name: Carmen." If there are some not-bad jokes and some neat little tricks (such as a slapstick bit of dissociation: the musicians are playing on camera while seagulls screech on the soundtrack), there are also metaphysical quizzes, like Joseph's "Why do women exist?" and Carmen's "Why do men exist?," and garbled profundities—"The police are to society what dreams are to the individual." And there's indifference.

Uncle Jean has lost his interest in youth, in Pop culture, and—if he is to be believed—in movies. And he makes the mistake that many other artists who have lost their strength make: he condemns the public. ("Kids today are scum.") The picture isn't as rancidly self-pitying as Godard's 1979 "Every Man for Himself," but it's more shallow, more withdrawn. He's contemplating the eternal; he's also wryly (and ambivalently, of course) celebrating being out of it. The basic feel of "Carmen" is "What's the use?" Godard can hardly bring himself to throw up his hands. He gives the impression that maybe he'd rather sit around listening to Beethoven's late quartets than make movies. (Uncle Jean the comedian wanders through the action turning away from whatever he sees and muttering comments like "I won't work under these conditions.") At the start of "Carmen," Uncle Jean doesn't want to leave the seclusion of his hospital room; he wants to stay inside. And by the end of this movie you may agree that he should—that he's in need of healing.

—PAULINE KAEL

◆

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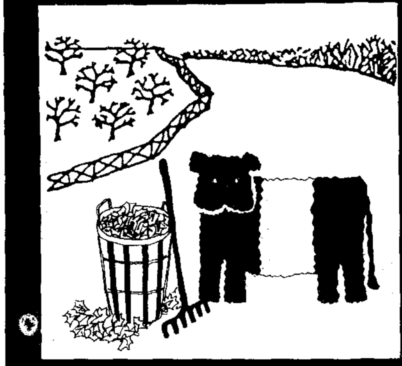

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BOOKS

Richard Rovere

ON or about June 20, 1790, Thomas Jefferson, then Secretary of State, Alexander Hamilton, the Secretary of the Treasury, and James Madison, member of the House of Representatives for the Fifth District of Virginia, met over Jefferson's dinner table at 57 Maiden Lane, in Manhattan, and reached one of the momentous agreements of American political history. Depending on how you look at it, it was the last of the great constitutional accords, such as that which gave the small states equal representation in the Senate, while the more populous states would prevail in the House of Representatives. Alternatively, it was the first major conflict resolved by the newly established government, and, as such, marked the beginning of the American political system.

Two issues were involved. First, whether the new national government would assume the debt incurred by the states during the Revolutionary War. Hamilton had proposed this five months earlier, in his Report on the Public Credit. Here was a classic regional conflict. Virginia, which pretty much spoke for the South, had arranged to repay its debt. It would gain little if the national government were to pay off the debt of others. The Northern states had not paid theirs (and also had more debt—nearly a third of the battles of the Revolutionary War were fought on New York soil). Northern financiers had bought up a good deal of this debt, in the form of much-discounted bonds, and stood to make a bundle if Hamilton could deliver.

The second issue was whether the capital would remain in New York or move South. The Constitution had left the matter unresolved, providing only that the seat of the government of the United States be located in an area "not exceeding ten miles square." Not just region but mores were at issue. Was ours to be a country run by Southern farmers or by Northern financiers? Never mind that the Southern farmers concerned were not quite plowmen, while the Manhattan financiers had to deal with an already developed urban democracy that was not notably disposed to an oligarchy of position. Something large and enduring was at stake. Jefferson and Hamilton understood. Jefferson made the deal. The war debt would be assumed. In return, the capital would move to a swamp on the banks of the Potomac which turned malarial in April. (Any congressman who lingered on into May might not be back in December, when Congress then convened.)

A hundred and fifty-eight years later, *The New Yorker* decided to establish a Letter from Washington as a regular feature of the magazine. A Letter from London, written by Mollie Panter-Downes, and a Letter from Paris, written by Janet Flanner, were already well established. With the plain precision that marked all his work, Richard Rovere, who was to write the new Letter, describes the assignment in his posthumous memoir "Final Reports" (Doubleday; $16.95). As with London and Paris, Washington was to be written about "as if it were a foreign metropolis."

I would hold that the Compromise of 1790, as historians refer to the Jefferson-Hamilton agreement, was essentially constitutional in nature—a separation of powers as important in its way as that between the executive and the legislature. The decision was made that the seat of government was to be removed from the otherwise natural capital, the soon-to-be biggest city in the country, the center of commerce and finance and culture. The decision had great consequences. The economy began to grow on an axis moving west from New York to Chicago, scarcely touching Washington in any sense of the word. (Well into the second half of the twentieth century, national associations, such as the association of state governors, routinely had their headquarters in Chicago, where the railroads met.) All else was in New York. The port, Wall Street, the Opera, the *Times*, *Time*, NBC, Madison Square Garden, Madison Avenue, the Village, Fifth Avenue—where to stop? The culture

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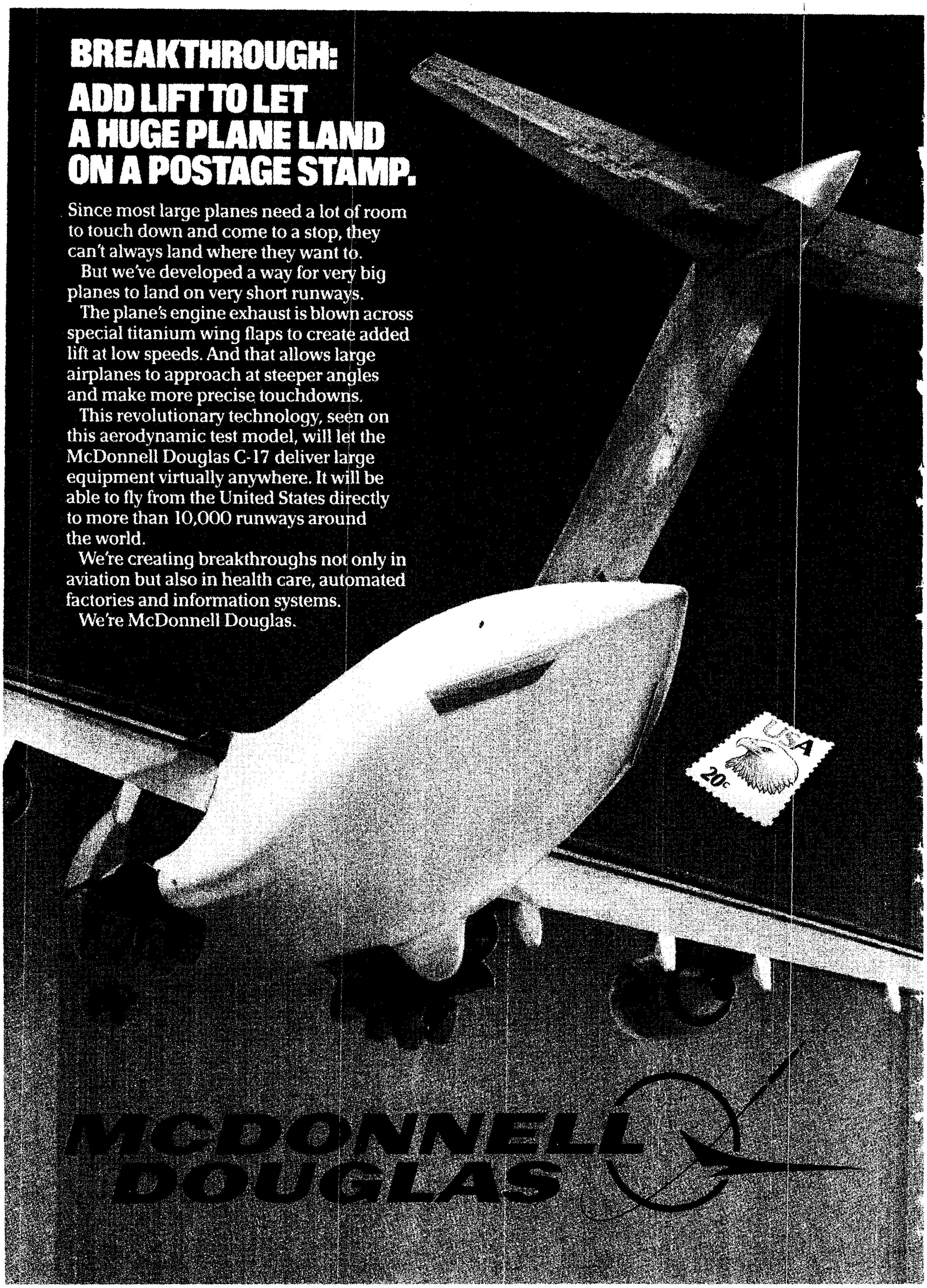

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in the largest sense was in New York; government was somewhere else. Among other things, this meant that when the forces of the twentieth century required the two to become deeply intertwined neither was ready. Neither *knew* the other. Consider the prolonged reluctance by American business to accept the necessary roles of government in a modern economy; or the incredible resistance in Congress, just twenty years ago, to civil-rights legislation. For thirty years, Richard Rovere recorded this encounter. There is no œuvre equal to it in American annals.

His memoir re-creates experience with the compression and audacious truthfulness that we came to assume in his writing about others but only now encounter in writing about himself. He kept a journal, at least intermittently, from the early thirties to his death, in 1979. "My formative years," he writes, "were the 1930s." Normal. These were the years he attended college, got his first job, wrote his first articles. But what is noteworthy is that his formative years were spent in *New York* of the nineteen-thirties. This is to say New York of the era of the Communist Party, and its assorted offshoots and "fractions," as the term came to be in the not always flawless English of the varied participants. It is an experience now all but forgotten. It barely (although importantly) touched Washington, and was never at all understood there. On the other hand, as with any powerful generational experience, it did not go away; rather, it passed on in ways usually unrecognized but not less real. (Not the least quality of Rovere's memoir is his sense of the continuities here.)

Robert Warshow, writing in *Commentary*, in December, 1947, summed up the nineteen-thirties in New York:

> For most American intellectuals, the Communist movement of the 1930's was a crucial experience. In Europe, where the movement was at once more serious and more popular, it was still only one current in intellectual life; the Communists could never completely set the tone of thinking. . . . But in this country there was a time when virtually all intellectual vitality was derived in one way or another from the Communist party. If you were not somewhere within the party's wide orbit, then you were likely to be in the opposition, which meant that much of your thought and energy had to be devoted to maintaining yourself in opposition.

Rovere did not escape; did not try. He writes that in his junior year at Bard "I decided to become a Communist." His journal of June 15, 1936, records, "Joined Communist Party under assumed name of Dick Halworth—same as my *New Masses* name." (Halworth was his middle name; the nom de guerre was ritual.) He wrote a bit; spent the winter of 1937-38 with Granville Hicks and his family in a no-frills farmhouse far up the Hudson Valley; returned to New York in the spring to become a literary editor of *New Masses*. (Come to think of it, for the rest of his life he would follow this pattern of moving up-river and down.)

Some of the scenes from his life then are mordant, irresistible. (He was obviously writing better for his journal than for his magazine!) There is Granville Hicks, the leading Marxist literary critic in the United States, earnestly immersed in a Marxist study group with the six Communists of Rensselaer County, New York. Or the sudden appearance at *New Masses* of Huntington Hartford, the A. & P. heir, fresh from Harvard:

> Hartford was quietly installed in one of our dark and musty cubicles and assigned the task of reading unsolicited fiction and poetry. We junior editors were assigned the task of making life as pleasant as possible for him. . . . I did my share of lunching, often paying the check, since, like so many of the rich, he seldom seemed to have any pocket money on him. . . . *New Masses* got not one penny of the forty million dollars he was then said to be worth, and I estimate that he still owes me something in the neighborhood of twenty or twenty-five dollars, which compounded over forty years would be a respectable sum.

But it was not to last. Rovere, in "that dreadful autumn of 1939," was to encounter the defining political experience of his generation—the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, in which the Soviet Union emerged on the world scene as the ally of the Nazis. He conveys the depth of the personal shock: "It is strange—or perhaps it is not—that I have so little memory, almost none, of August 24, 1939, the day the Soviet-Nazi nonaggression pact was made known to the world." He records that in his life "this was an event as stunning and as consequential as Pearl Harbor." But while he can recall precisely where he was on December 7, 1941—and precisely where he was when Franklin D. Roosevelt died, precisely where he was when John F. Kennedy was shot—August 24th remains "a blank, a nullity, a cavity in time. . . . My memory begins to return three or four days after the news, and it is largely a memory of walks." Now came the critical decision. He could have got over the shock, denied what happened. Many did. He could have turned to political opposition, as many also did. But he did neither. He was a writer, and decided to remain one, with one great lesson learned: "Don't surrender your independence to anybody." He never did. Even to the extent of not moving to Washington when he began to write his Letter, remaining instead in Dutchess County with his wife, Eleanor, and making the occasional trip to Washington by train.

His first Letter, dated December 20, 1948, described, with a measure of glee, the capital and its seers getting over the shock of Truman's reëlection. From the first, he had a genius for spotting the illuminating detail. Anticipating a Dewey victory, the Republican Eightieth Congress, with the particularly penny-pinching Illinois Senator Charles Wayland (Curly) Brooks handling the matter, had appropriated a huge sum—"only a trifle less than a hundred thousand dollars"—to build a platform on the east side of the Capitol, where the swearing in would take place. "It is the most impressive lumber pile of its sort ever erected," Rovere said, and added that it was now known as the C. Wayland Brooks Memorial Stadium.

Still, the past had not left him. That first Letter referred to the Hiss-Chambers affair; there was an apt passage from *Pravda;* Henry Wallace was "a neo-Marxian reformer." But then the past wasn't yet past: its meaning was still being fought for. Shortly thereafter, in his introduction to "The God That Failed," R. H. S. Crossman was to write, "No one who has not wrestled with Communism as a philosophy, and Communists as political opponents, can really understand the values of Western democracy." Rovere felt that. And he knew shadows; heard voices. This never left him. Nor, in truth, any of those who'd had his experience. How to describe the American cultural encounter with Marxism and the sundering of the group of immigrants who mainly brought it here? In 1946-47, Lionel Trilling wrote his novel "The Middle of the Journey." It can be read only as an account of the relations between Alger Hiss and Whittaker Chambers. But while Trilling knew Chambers slightly, he was not aware of the existence of Hiss. The Hiss case, as it came to be known, broke some months after the novel was published. And yet Trilling *did* know. Because somewhere out there the things he wrote about *had* to be taking place. That is the difference between that generation and all the generations that preceded it and all that have followed or will follow.

In his personal politics, Rovere became a Democrat: for him the party of the center. Toward the end of his memoir, he writes of his friend Joseph Lash, "Like him, I was a Stalinist forty years ago. The two of us are among the few who did not move from the far Left to the far Right, or away from politics altogether." Rovere's politics were seasoned and restrained—the mark of that earlier trauma—but nonetheless felt. He was a liberal, and he was a liberal Democrat. He did not much like Republicans. There were exceptions. In this memoir, he writes with great affection of Robert A. Taft. But in his first Letter, for example, he is so *pleased* that all the stuffed shirts were wrong, and that the Republicans lost, that there is no room for the sort of detachments he was capable of in other matters. In retrospect, Truman's victory may or may not have been such a good thing. The Democrats had had sixteen years in office; it was time the Republicans had a turn, not least in order to learn what modern government requires of those who would govern. They had worked at it in the Eightieth Congress—the first they had controlled since 1931—and had done well, enacting the Marshall Plan, for instance. But only to be denounced by the President as "do-nothings," and to lose their majority to boot. A bad lesson. Dewey's defeat discredited the "Eastern" Republicans, with consequences that are more in evidence today than ever.

Rovere's weakness in this respect was also a strength. None knew better than he when the Democrats went wrong. The nineteen-sixties—that "slum of a decade"—were wrenching for him. He hated the Vietnam War; despised Nixon. Even Truman diminished with time. He came to think that the Korean War, which he had much supported, began the militarization of American foreign policy. (Yes and no. We might have avoided the North Korean invasion; but to have acqui-

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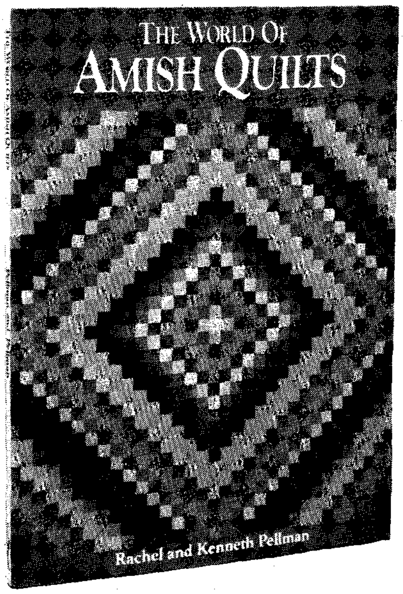

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esced in it would have had miserable consequences. Vietnam did *not* logically follow. Even so, it can be granted that, as he writes, "in Korea, as in Vietnam, we . . . confused the national interest with an ideological preference.") His final Letter, dated March 12, 1978, recounts the muddle the Carter Administration was getting itself into. (Although Rovere suggests that even he had been surprised by the outcome of the 1948 election, it is clear he would have called 1980.) The bureaucracy? An "ungainly monster." The Party? Well:

> Common sense may call for a new farm program or the closing of obsolete shipyards or the elimination of wasteful and environmentally destructive hydroelectric projects, but there is nothing in the Constitution or in the 1976 Democratic platform that requires the President to do anything at any time merely because common sense seems to call for it.

Having helped to draft that platform, I can but agree. The passage is revealing, however. This is where he came out in the end—for common sense, however uncommon a virtue. There is nothing heroic in this, and, accordingly, only a strong will can cleave to it. He sums up: "My generation has a lot to answer for."

And also much to be proud of. Men and women like him saved us from the totalitarian temptation. And *kept* saving us, even to the point of numb weariness. (Near the end of his book, he writes, "No longer any point in asking Mary McCarthy why compassion led her to celebrate virtue and strength of character in Hanoi that she had never discerned elsewhere—not in Saigon, not in New York or Paris, not on Cape Cod or in the groves of academe.") Yet resorting simply to common sense bespeaks an exhaustion of ideas and, in turn, a decline of energies. He would, I think, be writing about that in this Presidential year.

There are two other large themes that, had he lived, he would have addressed, and that someone ought to address. The first may be thought of as the breakdown of the Compromise of 1790. In Rovere's professional lifetime, the division of powers between New York and Washington—and it was just that: a quasi-constitutional arrangement arising from specific political ideas and with definable political purposes—began to collapse. When illness had finally prevented him from making his trips to Washington, he wrote of "the follies and occasional splendors of that awesome center of imperial power—a city I first got to know when it seemed an outpost of empire rather than a center." In the half century, the power of New York has declined almost in proportion to the imperious, if not altogether imperial, ascent of Washington. Consider that the day came when the city—the center of the wealth and the financial institutions of the nation—was as near as makes no matter to being bankrupt, and the capital had to "bail it out." New York is still a great city; but slowly, inexorably, Washington becomes the greater. Yet Washington, deprived of the diversity of New York, is not prepared to be great. The power is unrefined. There are too few filters of sensibility through which ambition must pass toward fulfillment; too few standards that must be met. A President of the United States, for example, can state propositions about important matters in which he is simply *wrong*. No one is embarrassed; no one is surprised. That is "inside the Beltway," where standards are lower.

The second theme is a political transformation that, by contrast, Rovere seems not to have noticed—a failing he may have imposed on himself. His first Letter, in the aftermath of Truman's 1948 victory, essentially concentrated on how wrong the experts had been. In their "first, fine flush of humility," he wrote, "they sounded as eloquent and emphatic as Horace Walpole, one of the best of all political observers, when he learned of the coalition that had been formed by Pitt and Newcastle—an event as unthinkable to him as an invitation to Dewey and Wallace to enter Truman's Cabinet would be to us. 'I renounce all prophesying,' Walpole wrote Sir Horace Mann. 'I will never suppose that I can forsee politically.' " Rovere wrote of Washington as "shocked and incredulous at first, like every other community that had been penetrated by the false doctrines of opinion research." Here his literary and historical bent misled him. (Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., in his graceful foreword to the book, writes that throughout his life Rovere was fascinated by writing and by writers—much more than by politics and by politicians.) Opinion research—polling—was just beginning (and, in truth, wasn't all that bad in the Truman-Dewey contest). In short order, it became a highly accurate measuring device. This was part of a profound transformation in politics which Benjamin Ginsberg, of Cornell Univer-

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sity, has likened to the movement from a labor-intensive to a capital-intensive activity. In the age of labor-intensive politics—the torchlight parade, the monster rally, the precinct captain—the party or parties of the masses possessed, if not an advantage, at least a countervailing force with which to contest the power of the party or parties of wealth. In the second half of the twentieth century, this countervailing force has been greatly diminished. The Iowa caucuses and a few such events apart, it is television, not doorbell ringing, that does the trick, and all that requires is money. Moreover, polling gives the party of wealth access to the opinions of the nonwealthy which the "social proximity" to the masses—Ginsberg's term—had pretty much made the preserve of the party of the masses. Which is to say that Jim Farley knew what folk were thinking in the brickyards of Rockland County, and a succession of Republican Presidential candidates not only did not but didn't know anyone who did. All that has changed. There is a vanguard in politics, all right, but it is not the vanguard of the proletariat dreamt of in Rovere's youth. It is, rather, a vanguard of small groups with lots of money, a good pollster, and the best commercials.

But this review is too much taken up with politics. "Final Reports" is far more a personal book—a book about people and places. Mostly memorable people, mostly small places. Rovere writes with special tenderness of that bit of Manhattan where he will always walk. He refers to it in the Spanish term *querencia*, which he calls "a kind of fitting, affectionate feeling for a particular environment, for a place—or it may be a community—that gives one nurture." For him, it was the few blocks between *The New Yorker* offices, the Hotel Iroquois, the Century Association, the New York Public Library. Later to Key West, where he and Eleanor went frequently in his final years. Those years were a prolonged agony: "I am just about immobilized by arthritis and (worse, I think) by what orthopedists call a 'muscle deficit'—a condition visited upon me when, in 1973, a surgeon sliced through some neck and shoulder muscle in order to remove a malignancy fetchingly known in the trade as a 'rodent ulcer' . . . He got the rat, and I got a pain in the neck and a cervical collar that keeps my head from falling into my lap." It was not fair to someone so kind. But he endured with only the fear that the pain would make him less himself:

> Oh, but I hate it, hate it, hate it. I hate it and fear it and can find few words that reach the depths of my feeling. The truth is that my character is being altered in ways I find unbearable to record. I seem to myself to become pettier and meaner and more selfish by the hour . . .

In the beginning was the word, and in the end also, and, as much as ever he could discern it, the words were true. This memoir is so much larger than its rather small compass. The mind expands as you go along. Halfway through, this reviewer began to think of the words of John O'Hara's that became his epitaph:

> Better than anyone else he told the truth about his time, the first half of the twentieth century. He was a professional. He wrote honestly and well.

Then, there on the next-to-final page of "Final Reports," the next-to-final name invoked: John O'Hara. And of Richard Halworth Rovere it can be said that better than anyone else he told the truth about politics in his time.

His final paragraph thanks the staff of the Vassar Brothers Hospital, in Poughkeepsie, where he died.

—DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN

BRIEFLY NOTED

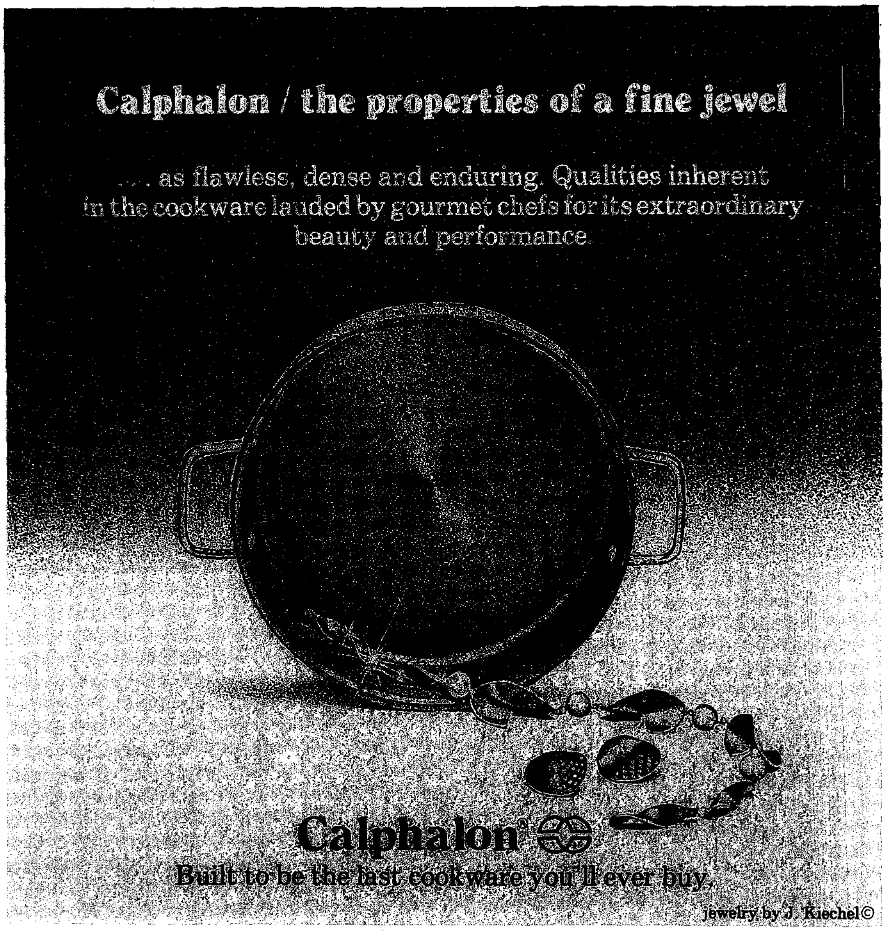
FICTION

THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE, by Norman Lewis (Pantheon; $13.95). The man of the title is a forty-three-year-old British free-lance journalist named Ronald Kemp, who is based in Tripoli and finds himself caught between the forces of an attempted C.I.A. pro-Egyptian coup against Libya and the forces of the Libyan military. (He is also bewilderingly courted and crushed by both sides, and, ironically, in the end rewarded by one.) The story Mr. Lewis has to tell is a good one, full of life and revelation, and he tells it well and with a nice, wry wit: "A miserable sprawl of fishermen's huts attracted expatriate photographers in search of pockets of the steadily vanishing picturesque." He also has an attractive feeling for his characters (both European and Arab) and a grim understanding of the up-to-the-minute technology that the present Libyan regime has so horrifyingly grafted onto its traditional Arab culture. His is a novel to enjoy unreservedly.

THE PYRATES, by George MacDonald Fraser (Knopf; $16.95). In

"Chapter the Last," Black Sheba—the only pirate featured here who is neither white nor male; the only pirate unimpressed by the blond (nay, golden) Vanity, fresh, in more ways than one, from a Swiss finishing school, and an admiral's daughter to boot; and the only pirate, but not the only female, smitten by our hero, a captain in the British Navy and "the young Errol Flynn, only more so," who has been instructed by Samuel Pepys to deliver a bejewelled crown to the king of Madagascar—chokes a cigarillo-puffing sentry and escapes from a cage littered with banana peels and Vanity's empty makeup jars, and suspended over an octopus pool ("The tricky part was to slip the floor-bolts while clinging to the side-bars with the rapier in her teeth"), and then scores her own performance: "Six out of six for technical merit, but not more than four for presentation." Some readers judging this latest extravaganza from the pen of George MacDonald Fraser, whose warmup exercises included writing the script for "Octopussy," will knock off a point because Flashman is sitting it out. Other reactions to these anachronistic antics, which include Turkish hordes toting six-packs of sherbet and a Francophile corsair who has studied "Treasure Island" better than his French ("Aha, les petits Blobs Noirs!"), will range, as the plot thickens, from thinning patience to unfathomable delight.

THE FOURTH PROTOCOL, by Frederick Forsyth (Viking; $17.95). The time is the early winter of 1987. Margaret Thatcher is planning to call an election in the summer and run for a third term. A Russian cabal (whose members, as is expected these days, include Kim Philby) has devised a nasty scheme that will discredit the Conservative Party, bring in a far-left Labour Government, and thus remove Britain from NATO. But British Intelligence in the person of a maverick named John Preston stumbles upon a clue to the Russian mischief. Mr. Forsyth, as always, is a superb entertainer, his knowledge of the inner workings of the Russian, the British, and even the South African intelligence machines is seemingly comprehensive and authentic, and every move he makes is entirely acceptable. His characters, also as always, are totally faceless—distin-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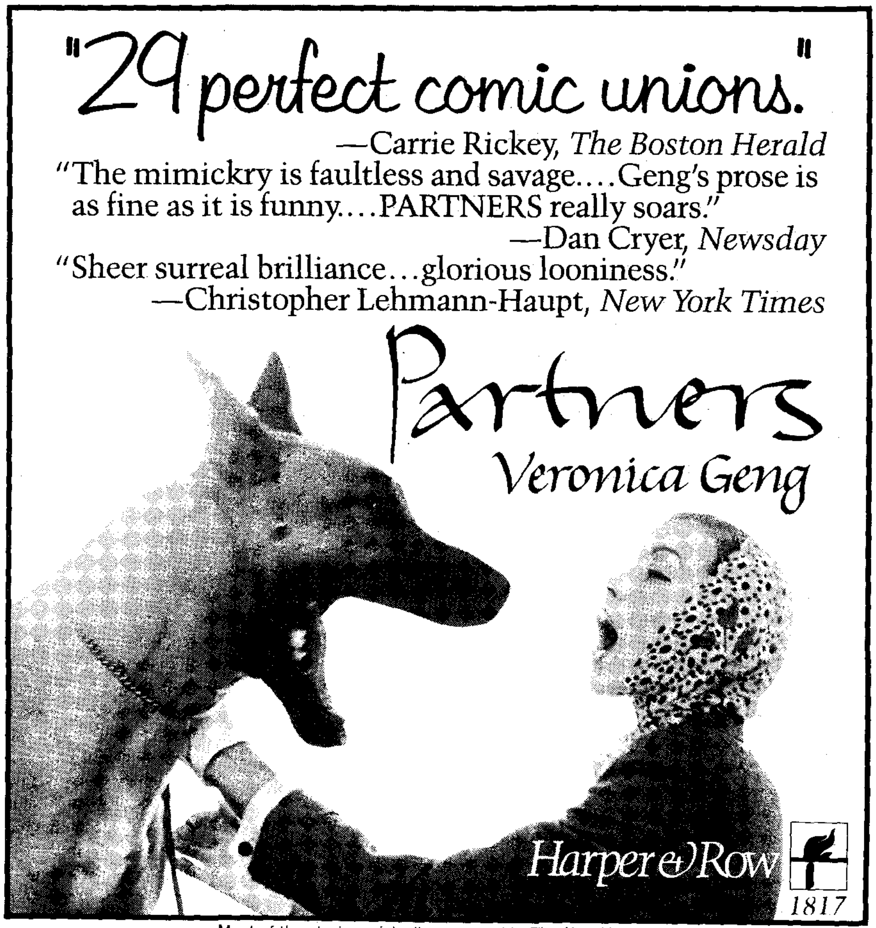
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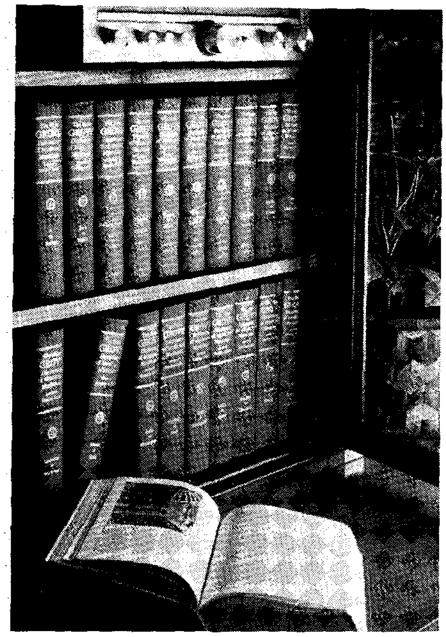

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GENERAL

JOSEPHINE HERBST, by Elinor Langer (Atlantic-Little, Brown; $19.95). An original and superior biography of a radical writer who was for some decades one of the brighter literary talents on the American scene, but who died in relative obscurity, in 1969, at the age of seventy-six. Josephine Herbst left Sioux City, Iowa, in 1915, settled in New York City in the early nineteen-twenties, and was immediately caught up in the political and intellectual ferment of the years following the First World War. She worked as a journalist and wrote short stories and novels, including a trilogy that attracted great critical attention; she had "free love" affairs (one of which ended in a hopeless marriage); and there were interludes in Left Bank Paris and Weimar Berlin, and, in the nineteen-thirties, Nazi Germany, Mexico, Loyalist Spain, and Soviet Russia. She had friendships, most of them enduring, with people like Maxwell Anderson, Edmund Wilson, John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway, Katherine Anne Porter, and, in later life, Saul Bellow, who appears to have considered her a literary artist of the first rank. Her eclipse came in the period after the German defeat, when the rising tide of anti-Communism in this country brought former radicals, progressives, and "premature anti-Fascists" under suspicion, or worse. The author has done wonders in re-creating the times Josephine Herbst lived through, and presents to us, fresh, the portrait of an unforgettable human being. Photographs.

THE LAND OF ULRO, by Czeslaw Milosz, translated from the Polish by Louis Iribarne (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $17.95). A poet's intellectual or spiritual autobiography. Milosz, who has been an exile since 1951, mentions the problem of writing in Polish while living abroad, but this work is concerned more with belief than with technique. Perhaps because he was born in Lithuania, he has a sense of Polish nationality which is at once intense

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and skeptical, as is his allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church. He talks about Polish writers—his colleague Witold Gombrowicz; his distant relative Oscar Milosz, who lived in Paris and wrote in French; and the national poet Adam Mickiewicz. He also discusses Dostoyevski, Blake, Swedenborg, and Goethe. The thread that winds through his discourse—limpidly translated by Mr. Iribarne—is his discovery or recognition of the aridity and the evil that have resulted from the West's adoption, in the eighteenth century, of the mechanistic theories of science. Hence his attraction to heretical thinkers who, he believes, have tried to rescue man and, above all, the imagination from modern materialism. Though in this book he does not describe his experiences in the underground during the Second World War or in the Communist state after it, his firsthand experience of evil is evident. Milosz seems to have been, from childhood on, a lover—who adored a toy squirrel when he was six, and whose capacity for rapture has never left him.

FROZEN STAR, by George Greenstein (Freundlich; $16.95). There are many wonderful passages in this book on the latest and most speculative developments in astronomy. For example, Mr. Greenstein, who is himself an active and productive astrophysicist, describes his encounter with Stephen Hawking, who, despite overwhelming physical handicaps, continues to pour forth extraordinary work at Cambridge. Mr. Greenstein went to see Hawking with the idea of trying to learn how he did it, and came away with the conclusion that there are some human phenomena that are simply beyond explanation. The book falters when it attempts to become literary—in little fables and the like. The scientific subject matter and the author's personal experience with it are so interesting that these imaginary bits seem rather trite. Fortunately, they are a small part of the whole, and the book is to be recommended.

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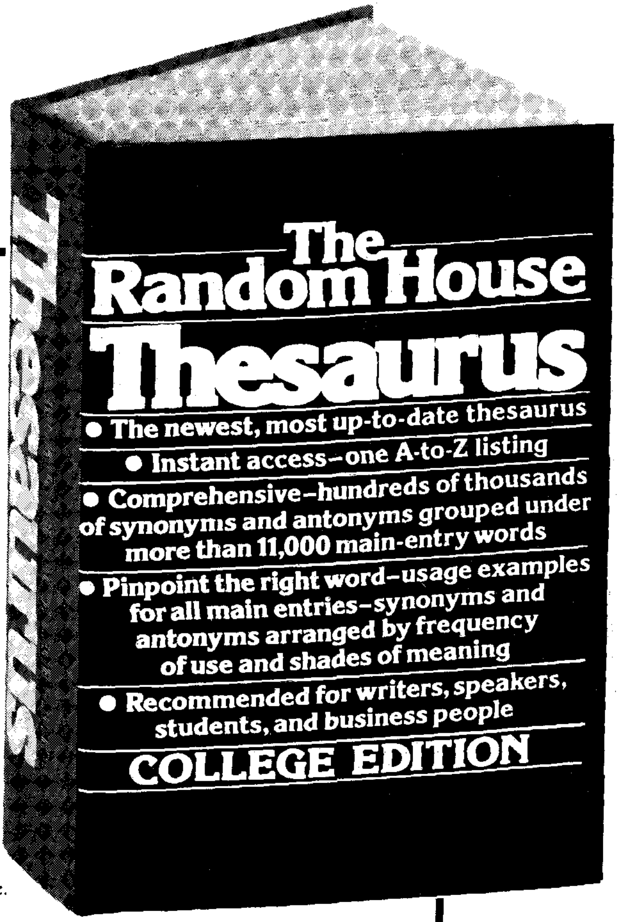
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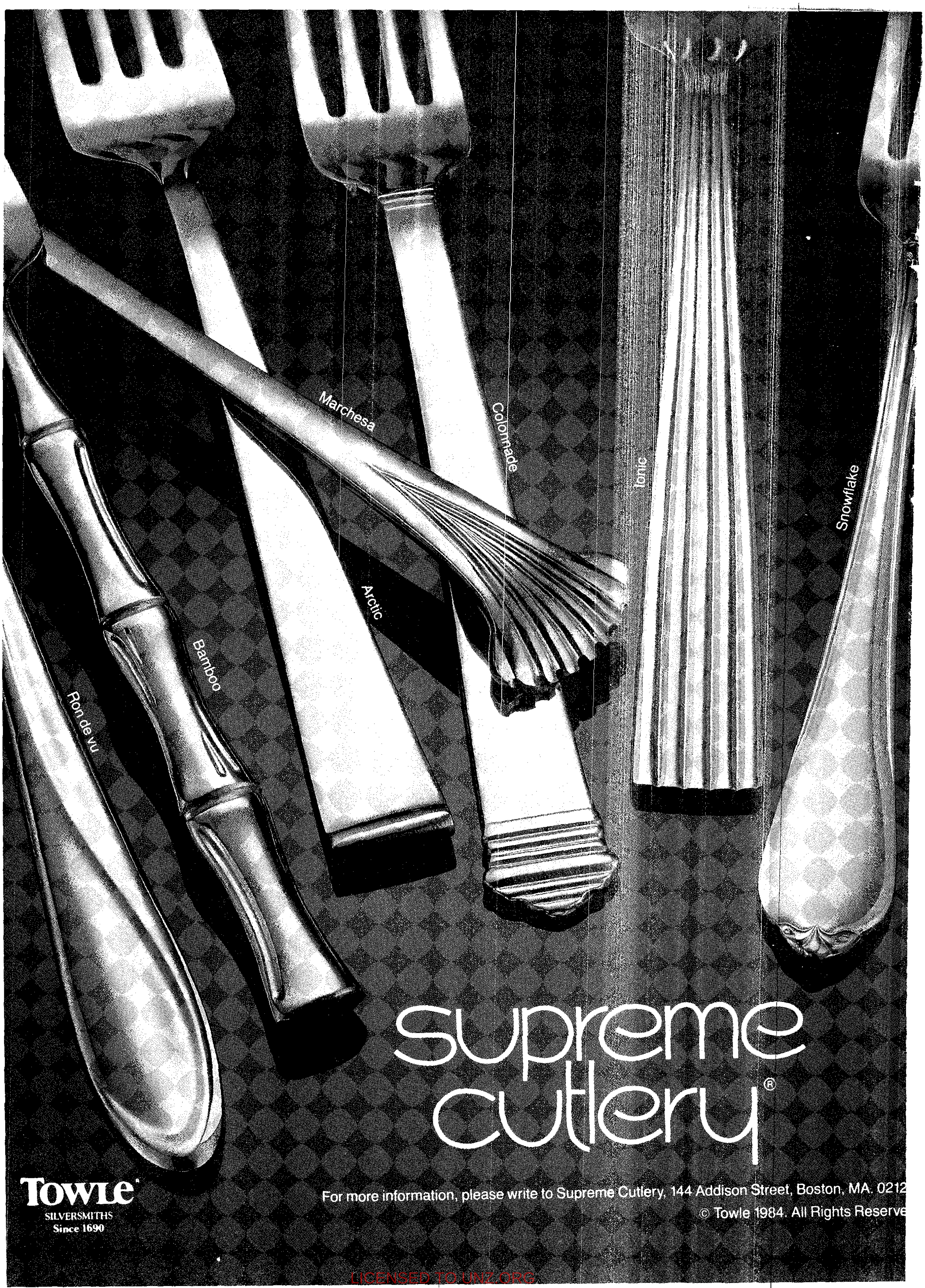
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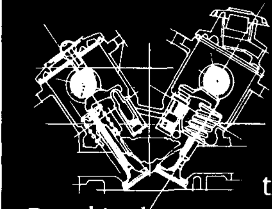

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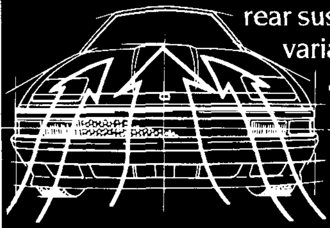

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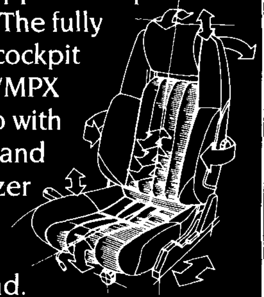

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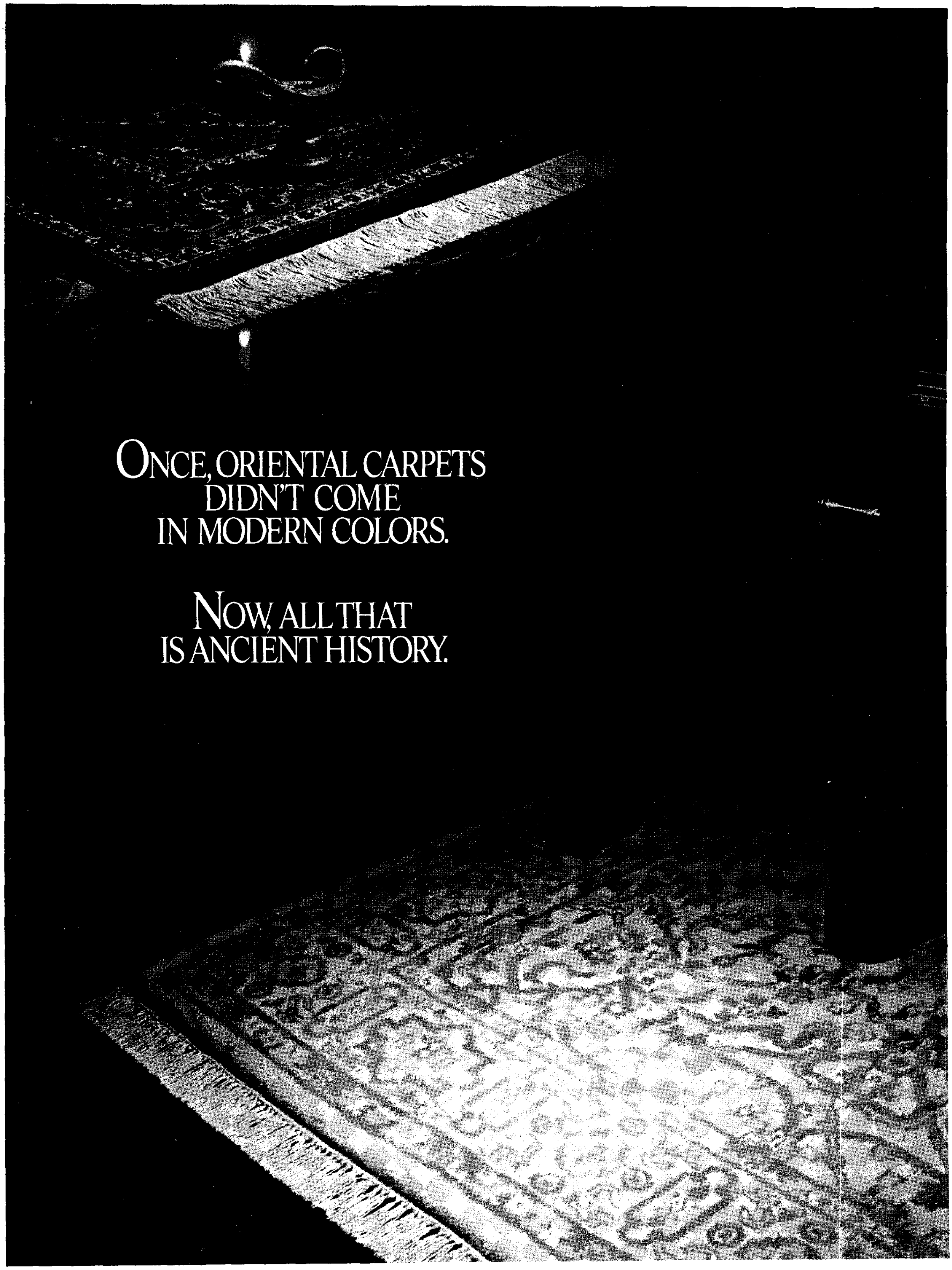

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